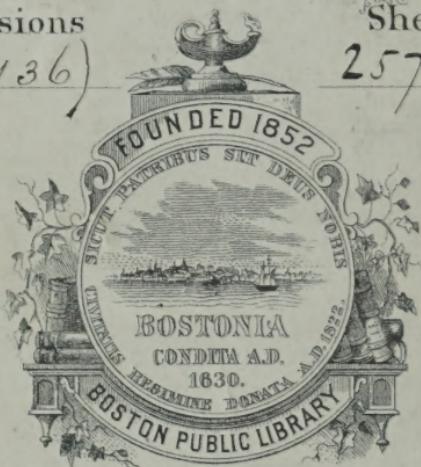


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ESSAYS FROM 'BLACKWOOD'

ESSAYS FROM 'BLACKWOOD'

BY THE LATE

ANNE MOZLEY

AUTHOR OF 'ESSAYS ON SOCIAL SUBJECTS'

EDITOR OF

'THE LETTERS AND CORRESPONDENCE OF CARDINAL NEWMAN,'
'LETTERS OF REV. J. B. MOZLEY,' ETC.

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M E M O I R.

IT would have unfeignedly surprised the author of the following Essays had she, at any period of her long and quiet life, imagined that a memoir of her would some day be written for perusal by general readers. For with a mind continually at work, Anne Mozley's outward life was exclusively a family and social one. Though writing and literary work had been her occupation for many years, no one out of her own family circle knew or even suspected it. Her mind, when she came down-stairs from the labour of the desk, was so free from apparent preoccupation; her manner was so open, so genial; her interest in home affairs, in the lives of her friends, in public events, in the thoughts and discussions of the day, was so vivid,—that suspicion was disarmed as to her having another world of her own, which for a great part of the day was indeed the world that interested her.

Yet so it was; and to readers who value the instinctive habit of observation, the power of drawing conclusions from slight traits, and a literary knowledge which within its limits was singularly various, this selection of essays from her pen will be acceptable, and it seems right to preface them with a short account of the writer.

Anne Mozley's home was, through nearly her whole life, either in Derby or its neighbourhood. But from the time when she was sixteen she was continually within reach of the intellectual life of Oxford: men who in after-times were to influence their generation, began to be familiar names to her; and the growing acquaintance-ship with them was an interest in the home circle. Her elder brother had gone up to Oriel in 1825; and when, after his ordination, he took charge for a few months of the parish of Buckland, near Oxford, his sister Anne kept house for him. This was in 1832; and at that time she became acquainted with the Newmans, an acquaintance that developed into an intimacy that was a lasting pleasure to her through life. The two sisters of Mr Newman became her sisters-in-law, and one of the two was for many years her daily companion at Derby.

Her original work began soon after 1840. It was a time when a great effort was being made to improve the books intended for children and those growing out of childhood, and some small

but very telling stories for children were her first productions. In 1846 a tale of the third century, entitled ‘The Captive Maiden,’ was published; and a collection of incidents in real life under the name of ‘Female Heroism,’ came out the same year. But even as early as 1837 she had in another way exercised herself in literature. In that year she brought out a collection of poetry with the title ‘Passages from the Poets.’ This was followed in 1843 by a volume called ‘Church Poetry,’ which came to a third edition; and in 1845 by ‘Days and Seasons,’ which also reached a third edition; and in 1849 by ‘Poetry, Past and Present.’ The field of selection in all these volumes is wide—Spenser, Cowley, and Sir John Davies stand side by side with Monckton Milnes and “Miss Barrett” (since more widely celebrated as Mrs Browning). The eighteenth century is scantily represented; and yet Miss Mozley knew the poets of that century well, and valued them, especially Gray.

She had not yet attempted criticism; but in 1847 she began to write reviews of books for the ‘Christian Remembrancer,’ and continued with a long series of articles of this kind till that review came to an end in 1868. In this series, one on Gray was as sympathetic and fresh as anything which has ever been written about that poet. But meantime she had written in another quarter a review, in some ways, of

even a more interesting character. In ‘George Eliot’s Life,’¹ the following passage occurs in a letter to the Brays, Nov. 25, 1859: “Thanks for ‘Bentley.’ Some one said the writer on ‘Adam Bede’ was a Mr Mozley, a clergyman, and a writer in the ‘Times’; but these reports about authorship are as often false as true. I think it is, on the whole, the best review we have seen.” It was written by Miss Mozley, and will be found at the end of the present volume. It is remarkable as penetrating the secret of the sex of the author of ‘Adam Bede,’ before this was at all generally suspected; and the reasons given for the conclusion thus reached are singularly precise and accurate. “George Eliot” further emphasised her liking of the review by directing her publisher to send a copy of her next novel (*‘The Mill on the Floss’*) to Mr Bentley, for the reviewer. ‘Bentley’s Quarterly,’ it may be observed, was a short-lived but able periodical which appeared in the years 1859 and 1860.

In 1861 Miss Mozley began to write in the ‘Saturday Review,’ and she was a constant contributor to that periodical till far on in 1877. Two volumes of these articles were republished under the title of ‘Essays on Social Subjects,’ one of which reached a fourth edition. And lastly, she was a valued contributor to ‘Black-

¹ Vol. ii. p. 143.

wood's Magazine' for many years, beginning in 1865.

But literary work was very far from wholly absorbing her time or her thoughts. In more directly feminine occupations she bore her full share, and is still remembered tenderly amongst the poor, whom she visited with as much regularity as if she had no other interest. The same may be said of her teaching in her class of young women on Sunday. One of her scholars, now far on in life, was seen with her husband at the funeral of her former teacher; and on a wonder being expressed at her being able to get so far as to the Barrow churchyard, "I couldn't do no otherwise," was the answer, spoken with a full heart. And before church needlework became general, it had occupied her time and attention. She planned and executed delicate and tasteful embroidery for churches, with the help of Pugin's book on medieval art, when as yet such accomplishments were wholly unknown.

Anne Mozley was one of a large family, and an important member of the home circle, which remained intact an unusual length of time. The break came with the death of her mother in 1867. Then a new home had to be chosen; it was found in the small village of Barrow, on the Trent, and there she and her youngest sister led an ideal life. Far enough from the

river to avoid the suspicion of damp, the village was yet subject to floods, which often only added to the picturesqueness of the scene. Even when the water penetrated into the lower part of the lawn, a “vignette” still remains in the memory, of the beautiful flowering trees and shrubs reflected in the little lake below, a bright sun adding radiance to the picture. Who has ever been in that sweet picturesque home without thinking it was in its way perfect? Here it was that Miss Mozley edited the works of her brother, Canon Mozley—a labour that was delightful to her. This was followed by her compiling the volume of his letters, and that in its turn by the most considerable work of her life—the editing of the letters of the late Cardinal Newman. The commission to undertake this was most unexpected by her, and she had much hesitation in accepting it. What finally decided her was the consideration that if she declined it, no one besides was left having such freedom of position and such personal recollection of the events that happened fifty or sixty years before, as to be able to carry the task through satisfactorily. This work came after the death of the sister who had been her companion for sixteen years, and who would have been most helpful to her; but when it was undertaken, the work formed the abiding interest of the rest of her life.

But what obstructions did present themselves ! First a fall and a badly broken arm. Then a partial loss of sight ; then two years before her death a total loss, for all practical purposes, though she could hardly be called blind. But her spirits were undaunted. Those who were with her could only wonder at the unfailing power she had of adapting herself to whatever circumstances she was placed in. But further change had become necessary. The probability of complete loss of sight, following the first warning given, had convinced her that she must give up her country life and return to Derby, where her sisters were living ; and it was well she did so, for what she feared did come, and she was henceforth dependent on others for everything requiring sight. But nothing quenched the cheerfulness of her nature. In her darkened state she was always the centre of conversation, always interested in what interested others, glad to be read to, and always a most attentive listener, and, it must be said, a keen critic. She took pleasure in having her house full of the children of the family, and in providing for their amusement, when she could see nothing of the effect upon them. "Aunt Anne" will remain a remembrance in many whose young life was enlivened by her affection.

The serenity of her nature enabled her to bear the complete change in all the habits of

life. Accustomed to be independent, she had to rest for everything on others; and this dependence, instead of fretting her, made her the more thankful for the reliefs she had. "I thought she was the sweetest lady I had ever met," was said by one who never knew her intimately. She had always had the blessing of good health; and illness, when it came, was sharp and short. A cold, that seemed of no consequence, was attended to merely for precaution's sake; a few days of almost painless but most rapid illness, and she sank on the 27th of June 1891.

In one sense, Anne Mozley never became old. "We never thought of her as an old lady," was said. She never suffered that contraction into her own self, that indifference to the outer world, which sometimes marks old age. Though she was in her eighty-second year, she had the characteristics, and till her failure of sight, almost the appearance, of middle age. The unusual brightness of her eyes in her earlier life could not be maintained when their inner light had gone.

Retired as her life had been, she had been the companion of some of the most cultivated and some of the most powerful minds of her generation, and she was worthy of their friendship.

All the articles selected for this volume, ex-

cept the last, came out in ‘Blackwood’s Magazine,’ but for that on ‘Adam Bede’ the kind permission of Mr Bentley was obtained.

The Bishop of Salisbury has kindly allowed the following words to be placed here:—

The writer of the above Memoir has asked me to put on paper some of my impressions and recollections of Miss Mozley; and this I gladly do, both for her own sake and for that of the other members of her family who have honoured me with their confidence.

My friendship with Miss Anne Mozley, as she has noticed in the kind dedication prefixed to the two volumes of Dr Mozley’s Essays, was one “of later years.” It was, in fact, one of the many happy results of my affectionate intercourse with her younger brother, Dr James Bowling Mozley, after his return to Oxford, as Regius Professor of Divinity, in 1871. He had delivered his important Bampton Lectures in 1865, and had become a select preacher in 1869, and so was well known to many of the younger as well as the elder generation in Oxford. But he did not at first feel thoroughly at home in his untried office and changed surroundings. Miss Mozley, as an elder sister, had not only a most unselfish love for him, and an abundant and discriminating admiration of his powers and writings, but a tender solicitude that he should shine and be

appreciated under these new conditions. His wife's death in 1872 was a great blow to him, and one, I feel sure, which permanently affected his health, though the results were not immediately apparent. All this made Miss Mozley very ready to take into her confidence those who, like myself, were warm and affectionate in our sympathy to her brother, and felt the value of his presence and influence in Oxford.

When his health failed suddenly in the autumn of 1875, and he was no longer able to do his Oxford work in person, we were even more closely united in trying in different ways to do what we could to supply his place. My part was to lecture, as his deputy, in the Latin chapel, which I began to do early in the spring of 1876. This I did first by reading aloud his own lectures, and then by delivering others of my own, into which I tried to infuse something of his tone of thought and apologetic purpose. Her part was to bring before the world that remarkable series of his writings, which to many were a revelation (alas ! all too tardy) of the existence in their midst of a brilliant intellect of the first order, on the side of faith.

It is worth while just to mention the rapid succession of publications of which she was practically editor—a work which she would never have undertaken and carried through had she not been constantly in the habit of thinking,

composing, and revising for herself—as this Memoir shows, and as this volume in some sort, though but by way of specimen, exhibits. First came the volume of ‘University Sermons’ in 1876, which at once conquered a place in public opinion higher, I think, and more permanently, than any single volume of sermons in my recollection. The titles of these sermons (as of the later series of Parochial sermons) were, I believe, all chosen by her, and on their manifest fitness much of the public appreciation of the sermons depended. They were good titles, such as interested the reader at the outset, and, without being markedly epigrammatical or artificial, took a place easily in the memory. Such titles as “Our Duty to Equals,” “The Strength of Wishes,” “The Unspoken Judgment of Mankind,” in the first volume, and a yet larger number in the second, are evidences of her power and insight, for which the reader may well be grateful.

Then came the volume of ‘Old Testament Lectures’ in 1877, and then after his death (4th Jan. 1878) the two volumes of ‘Essays Historical and Theological,’ in the selection of which I was privileged to take a considerable part. This brought me into frequent correspondence with her, and led to several delightful visits to her and her younger sister Elizabeth at their joint home at Barrow-on-Trent—a home which, as the Memoir well says, was in its way perfect. Here

we spent many happy hours reading letters and looking up essays and scattered papers, published and unpublished, and enjoying them all the more freely for each other's enjoyment. And here I first became at all fully aware, and that almost by stealth, of her own literary achievements. A good deal of what I discovered was due to the younger sister, herself a keen judge of character, and delighting (like the rest of the family) in its analysis, whether in real life or in fiction. The conversation at Barrow was as good as anything in Miss Austen's novels,—better, indeed, for it was more sympathetic, and involved a continual recognition of the mysteries of life and the truths of religion.

Next after the ‘Essays’ came, I think, the republication of the article from the ‘Christian Remembrancer’ on Dr Newman’s ‘Essay on Development.’ This she kindly undertook at the request of some Oxford friends, who found the argument of Newman revived by Roman controversialists or influencing young men with Romeward leanings. Then followed (1879) the volume of ‘Sermons, Parochial and Occasional,’ already mentioned. Then came ‘Lectures and other Theological Papers,’ a title suggested, I think, by myself, consisting mostly of the lectures delivered in the Latin chapel. In relation to these we had frequently to take counsel together, and I need not say that I was always the gainer by the intercourse. This volume

was published in 1883, and in 1884 appeared the last of this series—a volume of ‘Letters,’ which contains much delightful biographical material. The Introduction to the ‘Essays’ is also a charming sketch of her brother’s life from her pen, which has always seemed to me to be one of the most beautiful pieces of work of this kind with which I am acquainted. It is admirable for its truth and discrimination, as well as for its delicate touch and warmth of reserved affection. The skill of the trained artist and analyst of character is made at once more direct in its strokes, and more fine in its delineations, by the recollections of a lifelong love.

The year 1885 took me from Oxford and from its leisure for literature and friendship, and I do not think that I saw her since. But we were not forgetful of one another; and it was with no ordinary pleasure that I received as a last present from her in January of this year, and tried to thank her for it, her wonderful book, the ‘Letters and Correspondence of J. H. Newman,’—wonderful for its sympathy and its fidelity; wonderful for its reserve and its unreserve; wonderful for its grasp of detail and its breadth of good sense. English Churchmen have to thank Miss Mozley for many things, but this last gift is perhaps the greatest; for it enables them to understand, to sympathise with, and to admire the character of Newman, and yet to perceive its inherent

weakness and its grave defects. No one can read the book without sorrow and sadness—without painful reflections upon the lost opportunities in regard to the development of Church life in Oxford, especially inside the colleges, which his career reveals; but no one will be the least likely to think that Newman was wholly right and the rest of the Anglican Church in the wrong. These volumes are so transparently fair, and based upon such full materials, that the judgment deduced from them must be final.

I need say no more of her literary qualities: they were visible in everything she did or said or wrote. They assured for her a perpetual youth; they environed her with an atmosphere of grace and dignity; they invested her with a right to direct and command through the possession of an almost manly vigour, and a right to receive willing homage by virtue of her feminine sweetness and refinement.

JOHN SARUM.

SALISBURY, 3d November 1891.

The Bishop of Salisbury's interesting and appreciative notice leaves nothing further to be said. His having had experience of Miss Mozley in her literary capacity, emboldened the Editor to ask him to add details which only he could give, and for which warm thanks are due.

F. MOZLEY.

ESSAYS.

SOCIAL HYPERBOLE.

WHEN Mrs Malaprop claims for herself "a nice derangement of epitaphs," she shows a delicate perception of what good talk should be. The person who can apply the right epithet on every occasion has not much to learn in the art of expression; taste and discrimination have, in fact, received their last polish. We wonder what she would have said to the modern practice on this head, which substitutes hyperbole for all nicety of definition. Hyperbole has, indeed, from time immemorial, been the one great colloquial resource where this grace has been wanting. What rhetoricians have called the boldest of all tropes is also the most familiar. People who cannot define with any approach to accuracy have lived and died in ignorance of the defect, by indulging in wild exaggeration; the wilder only the more forcible in their esti-

mation, and the more boldly descriptive. There has always been a common stock of extreme terms, which it is thought lively and clever to misapply, and which youth and vivacity have, in fact, turned to very amusing purpose. The beauty of every date has enjoyed calling herself hideous if she affects to see the least cloud over her charms, and she dies about every trifle with a pretty grace. Sensibility has long been violently lavish of joys and sorrows above and below the occasion. Things are shocking, terrible, excruciating, enchanting, at a sort of haphazard as to which is which. Energy has always dealt in high numbers, and been profuse in myriads; and affection, playful or affected, ever talked in egregious superlatives and contraries. All this is so natural, so inevitable, while men's animal spirits, or their ambition to produce a sensation, are in advance of the perceptive and inventive faculty, that society would not know itself, if by any ordinance its members were restricted to a literal meaning, or an exact adjustment of adverbs and adjectives: half the world must hold their tongues altogether. But what we note as a modern innovation is the tendency to extreme in this direction, and the growing laziness of social emphasis. Never were niceties of opinion compressed into so small a compass as by the youth of the present day. We observe—and also find the practice adopted in all books which desire to reproduce society as it is—a general disposition to reduce all definition to the use of two or three terms. All

that affects the boy agreeably is jolly ; all that annoys the girl is horrid ; all that they find, or pretend to find, irksome, troublesome, or oppressive, is awful ; though even this rule of adaptation may be reversed : while every shade and degree of satisfaction, from ease up to rapture, is expressed in a compound of the two ; and the schoolboy—along with the considerable class that adopts his style—whose measure of content is filled up, is awfully jolly. Here is the climax to which nothing further can be added.

We can understand the convenience of this economy of mental effort. A word that will do for all occasions, and, like the bark of a dog, depend for its meaning upon intonation, upon force or vivacity of utterance, saves trouble, and reduces the intellectual expense of conversation to its minimum. But this, to all appearance, is not the view taken by the speaker, who has the air of doing something clever, and expressing himself with spirit ; as being urged to these eccentricities by a more than commonly vivid enjoyment of life. And sometimes the thing is effective. Far be it from us unduly to restrict the vagaries of animal spirits. Even from soft and ruddy lips, under the conciliatory charm of a musical utterance, these barbarous terms have been known, amusingly enough, to express the sweet audacity of youth. The rude formula surprises like wit at the first hearing. But the worst of it is, that this method of creating a sensation is so easy, that it tempts to repetition, while there can be no repetition of agreeable surprise ; and

the hearer, ceasing to be diverted, falls into the reflective vein. It occurs to him to ask,—if young folks habitually relieve themselves from the difficulty of selection, and feel they are committing a witty sportive indiscretion by adopting these or kindred phrases,—What are they to do when youth is past? There is a time when “jolly” and “awful” and “horrid” cease to be graceful. We are not amused by blind indiscriminate disgust or jollity in middle life. There must be a reason why.

All good talk is an art, and owes much to practice. When one of these airy talkers nears thirty, who has hitherto made two or three adverbs and adjectives serve his or her turn, we can scarcely picture to ourselves a more helpless case. He has taste enough to feel that such high-pressure terms are no longer for him; they strike upon his own as well as the listener's ear, as painfully at variance with the subdued level of his spirits. He is satisfied to be comfortable without any sense of irrepressible unintelligent delight in the mere sense of life. Yet what is he to do? He is not willing to give up emphasis, which is the spice of conversation, but where is he to find it? We are satisfied that many fluent talkers among our youth will be stranded ten years hence, and will have to retire into social obscurity, their style pointless, the right word never presenting itself, simply because a few obtrusive but inadmissible expressions will always keep to the front of memory, and put every fitting, select epithet out of reach, till the moment which called for it is past.

Ordinary English discourse is astonishingly wanting in neatness and exactitude ; and we believe the failing to be a growing one. A generation or two ago, Madame de Staël said that the English *could* talk well, but that, as the talent for conversation was useless in the service of ambition among them, they took no trouble about it. Eloquence of diction has not grown in favour since then. Nobody cares to listen as they used to do to good talk ; so, what people say must be condensed. An impression must be conveyed by some rapid means, and hyperbole is the readiest means. As a fact, few would exaggerate if they could say the thing exactly as it really *is*, so thrilling a pleasure is it to hit the mark. Wide-shooting is the common refuge of the tongue, which cannot measure or discriminate. Timid unobservant minds resort to it in mere hopelessness of successful plain speaking. They would not willingly shoot short of their aim, and therefore send their arrow anywhere so it is beyond the target. Our language is full of the superlatives of impotent exaggeration ; and the mind that indulges in them must live in a muddle. Accurate speaking as much drives to accurate thinking as clear thought leads to clear speech. Tongue and thought play into each other's hands. Practice in words clears up ideas. People who have never sought into the causes of what pleases or repels, can have nothing to say to the purpose ; but, by realising the charm of expressing themselves correctly, as far as their light goes, they are driven to thought, and thus nourish dormant dis-

crimination into life. The uniform appeal to the vast and vague, the hyperbolical vein applied to common things, is irreconcilable with anything else but a dull, untrained perception, a blindness inborn—or the result of laziness—to the nice varieties and subtle characteristics which distinguish things seemingly alike, and give to each its identity. Hence the weariness we feel when long subject to this large, burly, lavish style of talk; whether vaguely indefinite, or (a kindred though advanced temptation) passing from the abstract to the concrete, giving a body to exaggeration, shooting with the long bow in circumstantial narrative, and fixing quality and conditions with a view rather to effect than to truth. We weary, not because our moral sense is wounded by hearing things that are vaguely or positively untrue, but because we feel some intellectual deficiency in the speaker. Hyperbole, to please, needs a fine active fancy; it is indulged in, for the most part, through the want of this faculty, and in a desperate effort to conceal the void alike from speaker and listener. Yet perhaps of all figures humanity can least spare the hyperbole; it is the natural, the legitimate, nay the only engine for a large class of feelings, thoughts, and aspirations—the necessary reaction from rigid fact. It is only when it expresses neither animal spirits, nor sense of life, nor emotion, nor passion, nor the sublime, nor the unknown, nor the grotesque, nor the ridiculous—when it is neither grand, nor witty, nor satirical, nor insolent, nor contemptuous—that we take exception to its

rhetorical use; only when people treat plain things hyperbolically, because they cannot treat them exactly, and are lost to all sense of proportion.

Beyond these natural and legitimate calls for its use, hyperbole has another sphere, the most familiar of all, though not so distinctly acknowledged—a use which is indeed clouded over and obscured, because in it fancy works in the trammels of a certain subservience to fact; and that is panegyric. The original Panegyrical Oratory is said to have grown out of a strong feeling of the pleasure of existence; and a short-lived bombastic exaltation undoubtedly fits well still with certain occasions where men meet to testify that the world is worth living in. But it was better understood in its first rise. The panegyric spoken before excited Athenian multitudes was a permitted lie, recognised as such both by speaker and hearer, and distinctly opposed by critics to the Veracious. The orator made it part of his art to diminish and magnify solely with a view to effect, to dress up facts for the occasion, to tickle the ears of his audience with illusions, which they knew to be such in the long-run, but which met with temporary acceptance as ideal truth. Such hyperbole we are all sufficiently acquainted with still; but it needs a packed audience, and the worst of it is, it soon goes out of date and gets misunderstood. When a man says a thing, it requires some largeness of mind, the occasion being past, to perceive that he did not intend us to think he meant it; and this because it has become a com-

monplace of rhetoric, rather than a graceful necessity of some special occasion. It is the one force of American popular eloquence; it is the engine of the demagogue, who flatters his audience at the expense of every person and institution beside. It is the open resource of the social speaker; it secures the journalist his readers; even the popular preacher finds its use. Under its inspiration the orator's conscience is emancipated from severe fact. He rejoices in a grasp of the spirit above the letter of his theme. The present and the visible occupy and crowd up every corner of his perception; nothing that is past or to come can compare with the now and the present; he has reached a climax of joy, or fruition, or pre-eminence, which his hearers in some way or other share, or have assisted to bring about. The action under review is unprecedented. The hero of the hour has no fellow; the time, the occasion, has been foreseen and prepared for by all the preceding ages, and now absorbs the interest of an attentive universe. This is all very well while the occasion and the circumstance last; but the moment the cold daylight of common-sense is suffered to bear upon it, people have a sense of having been taken in, and then hard words are used.

All other forms of the hyperbole, if they are good to start with, keep their nature; but the panegyric, from such causes as these, becomes corrupt with time, and then it is "fulsome," "servile," "false," "truculent," "base." People will be over-severe on the

boastful hyperbole of a past age, which evidently took its cue from the ancients. We are convinced that, when the good people of three hundred years back, followed by Dryden and the thorough-going panegyrists of his time, wrote eulogistic prefaces, poems, dedications, which make us stare, and think ourselves so much more honest than they, the thing was understood by contemporaries. They were never supposed to mean it in any absolute, exclusive sense. They were well seen to be exercising an art, and judged by the success of that art. All that they said in well-turned verse did not render a counter-acting undercurrent of the contrary opinion dishonourable. But still, as we have granted, there is in this style a commerce with fact which is fatal to the life of hyperbole; it loses its nature and gets called a lie. It is not known for what it is, away from its context of time and place. The panegyrist of every age gets called names, and each age as it encourages him gets called names too. There is a notion of profit and bargain attached to the practice, and the toleration of it, which distinguishes it from other flights. We cannot help a suspicion that Walsh, for example, had ulterior views upon William when he makes a demigod of him, and ends a sounding enough verse with—

“These acts made Hercules a god,
And great Nassau a king ;”

and winds up his poem with the disclaimer—

“These subjects suit not with the lyre.
Muse ! to what height dost thou aspire ?
Pretending to rehearse
The thoughts of gods and godlike kings ;
Cease, cease to lessen lofty things
By mean ignoble verse.”

And yet they probably only struck his contemporaries as neat turns which did his “muse” credit ; and William himself, simply as compliments the occasion absolutely demanded.

A notable example of this panegyrical hyperbole is to be found in the great French preachers. They knew, and they knew that their hearers knew, of the enormous scandals of the Court of the Grand Monarque, but it did not wound anybody’s conscience to attribute to him godlike qualities, and to represent him as the one object on which the eyes of the visible and invisible world were alike bent with approving wonder. No language could be found exalted enough to express the glory of their King. *Le Ciel, L’Univers,* and *Les Anges* are assumed to be pretty exclusively occupied with the triumphs and magnanimity of Louis and his generals. They are all divinities together, so far as being lifted above common humanity is concerned. And this we believe from no base or selfish motives in the flatterer, but that really the nation, and the eloquence of the nation, was in such a stretched, tiptoe, crowing state of elation that language less full-dress and decorated would have been felt inadequate on all hands. Not a man in France could talk reasonably on such a theme, or, if he did,

could have got a hearing. Hence, passages selected by critics of the day for commendation and example, are precisely what would now be adduced as illustrations of gross and venal flattery and bombast, of which the present age is incapable. Molière, who showed himself so alive in his ‘*Précieuses*’ to the fashionable hyperbole of conversation, can hardly have been blind to the general excesses of oratory and of public declamation; but if so, he escaped suspicion. No conscience and no taste was awake to any touch of offence. Dryden, influenced by French taste, and the poet of all others most imbued by the spirit of his own day, was not likely to come second in this easy field for florid invention. He made a good start when a boy, in the lines quoted by Johnson, upon a nobleman dying of smallpox; where the pustules are first rosebuds, then gems, and at length stars—

“No comet need foretell his change drew on,
Whose corpse might seem a constellation.”

He makes quite as free with the angels as any Frenchman. They gather to review the king’s fleet:—

“To see the fleet upon the ocean move
Angels drew wide the curtains of the sky,
And Heaven, as if there wanted light above,
For tapers, made two glaring comets rise.”

Now, when the days of dedications and all incident temptations are over, the language Dryden permitted himself does amaze one. But it is not more strange that he could write what he did, than that the person addressed, and the public who read, could tolerate it.

The only solution is, that there was a general understanding on such things. It was a heightened form of the universal, and to us fulsome, social hyperbole of that day. He thought it possible to write to Lord Dorset, a man of intellect enough to know the measure of his own powers: "There is more of salt in all your verses than I have seen in any of the moderns, or even of the antients." "It is incident to an elevated understanding, like your lordship's, to find out the errors of other men, but it is your prerogative to pardon them, . . . and to forgive the many failings of those who, with their wretched art, cannot arrive to those heights that you possess, from a happy, abundant, and native genius, which are as inborn to you as they were to Shakespeare, and, for aught I know, to Homer." How dense would poor Dryden think the posterity which pronounces upon all this as "servility"; and sees anything unsuited to the imperious necessity for saying something handsome when, in testimony to a nobleman's good-nature, he gravely asserts that it is impossible for Lord Dorset to have either enemies or mere acquaintances! "They who have conversed with you are ever and inviolably yours." "Neither can we say we think we admire and love you above all other men; there is a certainty in the proposition, and we know it." To address a witty and affable nobleman in a preface to Juvenal, and to treat him with less than divine honours, would be to convict himself of unfitness for the task of translating a great classic. It was an

occasion for fine speeches, and it was not in him to disappoint expectation. But that in the course of ages a generation should be born which supposed he said all this seriously, would, we are satisfied, never occur to him. What! imagine that he wanted Lord Dorset to believe him, or to suspect him of anything beyond civility, when he pronounced him the better poet of the two, because he writes, “There is not an English writer this day living who is not perfectly convinced that your lordship excels all others in all the several parts of poetry that you have undertaken to adorn.” The strain has as little to do with conscience as with our views of personal dignity. So long as things sounded well, Dryden at least did not care for a strict consistency, and could insinuate a satire in the very midst of the most high-flown panegyric. Thus, in his monstrous eulogy on Charles II., he prettily contrives to represent him as but a mean rewarder of literary merit on earth, while he is exalted to its guardian angel in heaven. The “officious Muses” had accompanied him to our shores on his restoration :—

“ Though little was their hire and light their gain,
Yet something to their share he threw ;
Fed from his hand, they sung and flew,
Like birds of Paradise, that *lived on morning dew*.
Oh, never let their lays his name forget ;
The *pension of a prince's praise is great*.
Live, then, thou great encourager of arts,
Live ever in our thankful hearts ;
Live blest above, almost invoked below ;
Live and receive this pious vow,
Our patron once, our guardian angel now.”

If any of our readers are disposed to take offence at our too easy morality on this score, we can only say we are driven to it. We, too, have a received system of social hyperbole. We make excuses for a past age to defend our own. We do hear respectable men say such things, and commit themselves to such enormous statements when compliment is the order of the day, that a theory is absolutely necessary to reconcile ourselves with estimable humanity, that does the work of the world, and does it well too.

The truth was that no writer of our Augustan age, when treating of things of the day, felt himself up to the mark if he did not either lift up his theme to the skies or cast it to the swine, as party or personal considerations demanded. Whatever venality there was lay in making use, for private purposes, of hyperbole, which the previous generation of poets had devised simply to show their parts. The "enormous and disgusting," yet ingenious hyperbole of the Donne and Cowley school, which passed for imagination, made flattery easy when applied to that purpose. People were so used to the flinging of ideas together, prodigious in their opposition, that nothing was properly fanciful and ingenious that did not outrage proportion. A lady is not fair unless she dazzles the fishes when she bathes with a light brighter than the sun; nor does a lover get credit for his passion if his sighs do not magnify and accumulate into a high wind. Nothing obvious, nothing naturally suggested by the subject, passed for poetic fancy; truth and

feeling were the last things thought of;—in this resembling our poor and bare domestic hyperbole, to which people are driven from the same inability to realise their subject, while so painfully failing in the resource and ingenuity by which the sharp-witted poets in the age of conceits covered their defects. It is this hyperbole, an affectation of excess to hide deprivation and tenuity, that haunts our meetings and partings, which inflates the social orator, which stultifies the natural influence of the special scene. Everything is overdone in the endeavour not to disgrace an occasion which the exaggerator in his inner heart is conscious of not coming up to.

Yet of all figures it is the one which neither socially nor oratorically, nor in domestic literature, could we do without. A good hyperbole is an exquisite enjoyment. It hits the fancy with a double satisfaction—it magnifies the common and familiar, which is our native sphere, and brings the vast within an easy distance. Through this sleight of hand, there is nothing that a good hearty hyperbole does not for the time even us with. In fact, it owes much of its agreeableness to this knack of making great things subservient to our diversion, and subduing them to our lighter needs; and though simple force, expressing itself within the compass of plain speaking, never has recourse to exaggeration, there are occasions when, only by touches of the impossible, by compelling resemblances in things dissimilar, by magnifying the familiar out of its identity, can a full, strong im-

pression be conveyed. We speak of it here not as an engine of sublimity or terror, but as a social inspirer and elevator; as giving magnitude to our trifles, dignity to our quarrels, importance to our place and work in the world, and, above all, pre-eminence to the present—a very necessary inflation if most of us are to be content with our own task and office. We are, perforce, interested in matters which will sink presently like a drop into the ocean of time: hyperbole inflates the drop into a very respectable, nay, portentous bubble, and satisfies us till the collapse come, by which time another is ready to take its place. Thus, in every party crisis, what should we do without it? The question may be small, local, insignificant,—the struggle a mere storm in a teacup,—looked at from a matter-of-fact point of view; but hyperbole sustains our self-respect and gives dignity to our excitement. All history is invoked to find a parallel, and fails to find it. In every contest where the passions are well roused, hyperbole assists us to find something unprecedented; and people, who without this stimulant might feel their cause and themselves unimportant to the outer world, by its aid squabble through their lives in a comfortable complacency.

It is only the minority who can do their work, knowing precisely its amount of importance and utility; most men need magnifying-glasses. What would the press do without it, the proverbial country editor?—the religious newspaper, which is indeed the

privileged field for this figure, as in fact meddling with subjects that affect our highest interests? Every reader has his examples, fruitful in vituperative hyperbole. Our eye chances to fall on a last year's organ of the Papacy, which will illustrate our meaning: "There is not on record an instance of more stupendous duplicity and perfidy than that invasion of Sicily by Garibaldi, under the advice, guidance, and protection of Count Cavour and Lord Palmerston, the two wickedest and most perverse plotters against the Church and against Continental peace and order that ever cursed Europe." No doubt the interests involved here are momentous ones, but the style convinces one that the editor will never want heroes to out-Herod these Herods, even if he has to seek for them in a parish vestry. And happily this strain does not perpetuate antipathies. Superlatives break no bones. An hyperbolical philippic leaves us much where it found us when the storm is over; hence the magnanimity with which foaming disputants and rival editors can compliment and felicitate each other when the occasion for panegyric arrives.

But wit is the true sphere for the social hyperbole, enlarging its resources indefinitely. Hyperbole is so loose of details that it may touch the awful, the horrible, the disgusting, even the profane, without offence, without conveying the revolting features of the idea intended to be conveyed;—just serving itself of so much as fits its purpose, and ignoring the rest. Who thinks, in Charles Lamb's chapter on roast pig, of the

pig's inconvenience in that constantly recurring incendiарism ; or finds his nerves wince when Miss Brontë's ill-chosen word nearly plucks the eyes out of her tutor's head ? Who feels the facts involved in Colonel Crocket's threat of eating any man opposed to General Jackson ? or who reads with any recoil of the civilities which passed between the opposing pickets before Charleston, when one cried, "Would not you like to have some of our Johnny-cakes for your wormy bread ?" the other reflected, "This was a hard hit. The Federal bread is certainly very bad just now, the worms very large and very lively ! but we did not know before that they could be seen from the enemy's works." Anything absolutely impossible affects us more by its impossibility than by any other of its conditions, and there is a positive satisfaction in entertaining repulsive ideas divested of their repulsiveness. Nobody can be in very evil case who can express its inconveniences in a neat hyperbole. The parson knew how to keep the cold from heart and hearth who described his living—

"Far north, my lord, it lies,
'Mid snowy hills, inclement skies :
One shivers with the arctic wind ;
One hears the polar axis grind."

The quickened fancy itself gives tone. By affecting to magnify trouble, though it be real, the fun that works in every situation in life is brought to the front.

Thus, if a man wants us to feel for him or for his

cause he must not exaggerate. Pathos will have nothing to do with hyperboles; it keeps to its point, and affects us through a reproduction of a scene or a situation, guided to the moving points by the instinct of feeling. Numbers and vastness in their own nature counteract pathos. We are apt to feel more for an individual's calamity than if a thousand share in it. But this is because we lose the effect of literal and exact representation. Cowper, in his dirge—set to the music of a knell—which tells how

“Kempenfelt went down,
With twice four hundred men,”

makes us feel for eight hundred men like one. But this is done by a simplicity and exactness of detail rarely attainable, or even aimed at, where the fate of numbers is concerned. Contrast our sense of pity in a plain tale and that designed to be excited by the Rabbins' account of a great slaughter made of their people, when “there were such torrents of holy blood shed as carried rocks of a hundred yards' circumference above three miles into the sea.” But we are not seriously comparing styles of expression so far removed from one another as the Oriental and our own, though Southey has done his best to reconcile modern English ears to Eastern hyperbole.

Love is never so light and airy a sentiment as when its pains and longings are played with through this medium. Waller could not have been inspired by a serious passion when he composed his sweet lines

which represent his Sacharissa the sole object of his own and the world's devotion. It is by no means an extreme instance, but so pretty in its defiance of cold fact that we give it :—

“ That which her slender waist confined
Shall now my joyful temples bind.
No monarch but would give his crown,
His arms might do what this has done.

It was my heaven's extremest sphere,
The pale which held that lovely deer ;
My joy, my grief, my hope, my love,
Did all within this circle move.

A narrow compass ! and yet there
Dwelt all that's good and all that's fair.
Give me but what this riband bound,
Take all the rest the sun goes round.”

Hyperbole is, we need not say, the inevitable language of gallantry where feeling is not the thing to be conveyed, and, indeed, would change gallantry into something else, and so spoil sport. Not that the following charming and distinguished hyperbole, from Lord Dorset's Song to the Ladies of England, was unprompted by feeling, but it was the fever of excitement on the eve of an engagement, quickening the whole nature, and wit, as a prominent feature of that nature, into intenser action :—

“ Then if we write not by each post,
Think not we are unkind ;
Nor yet conclude our ships are lost
By Dutchmen or by wind.
Our tears we'll send a speedier way—
The tide shall bring them twice a-day.

The king, with wonder and surprise,
 Will swear the seas grew bold,
 Because the tides will higher rise
 Than e'er they used of old :
 But let him know it is our tears
 Bring floods of grief to Whitehall Stairs.
 With a fa la la la la."

Of course, the whole wit of the ‘Rape of the Lock’ lies in the exquisite use of this figure as an engine of gallantry. What prodigious machinery brought to bear on infinitesimal matters! We are never tired of the opposition of great ideas with small: the egregious comparisons and the apotheosis of trifles: from the toilet where

“The nymph adores,
 With head uncovered, the cosmetic powers,”

and

“Awful beauty puts on all its arms ;”

and most terrible among them the redoubtable lock, nourished by the nymph

“To the destruction of mankind,”

to the offices of invisible genii, some of whom

“Brew fiercest tempests in the wintry main ;”

while others, as potent over nature,

“Steal from rainbows ere they drop in showers
 A brighter wash ;”

or concentrate their cares on a lap-dog—

“Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.”

Again, the combat of beaux and belles—

“While through the press enraged Thalestris flies,
 And scatters death around from both her eyes,

A beau, and witling, perished in the throng,
One died in metaphor, and one in song.
'O cruel nymph, a living death I bear,'
Cried Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair.
A mournful glance Sir Fopling upwards cast;
'Those eyes are made so killing,' was his last."

But the whole poem is an example. The hyperbole of wits compels us to a supreme (though momentary) realisation of the near and familiar over the remote; and so is often a prodigious mode of expressing man's supremacy. Thus Mrs Partington mops out the Atlantic; and "all the planets and comets," according to Sydney Smith's showing, "meant to stop and look on at the first meeting of Parliament after the passing of the Reform Bill;" and when his friends the Whigs were turned out of office, the same authority announced, "Nothing can exceed the fury of the Whigs: they mean not only to change everything upon the earth, but to alter the tides and to suspend the principles of gravitation and vegetation, and to tear down the solar system." This certainly assists us to a notion of the temper of the Whigs upon being thwarted when they thought they held the world in a string. Yet these Titans can be individually very small in the same hands when he practises his diminishing powers. "When are we to see you?" he writes to Jeffrey; "a difficult thing at all times to do."

Hyperbole is the natural resource of contempt; indeed, through this means alone can it be judiciously expressed, or perhaps expressed at all. For contempt as an active feeling is incompatible with a

calm dispassionate judgment, and rushes into violent injurious comparisons. Hence the whole vocabulary of insult ; and it is astonishing the appetite the world has for this exercise of imagination, and how unduly, as we think, the great masters of the art have been estimated. What would “Junius” be without his hyperbolical detraction, which the world of his day gloated over ? Dip into these famous Letters, and pages and pages of coarse contempt make us wonder at the taste of our fathers.

“Whether you have talents,” he writes to the Duke of Grafton, “to support you at a crisis of such difficulty and danger, should long since have been considered. Judging truly of your disposition, you have perhaps mistaken the extent of your capacity. Good faith and folly have so long been received as synonymous terms that the reverse of the proposition has grown into credit, and every villain fancies himself a man of abilities. It is the apprehension of your friends, my lord, that you have drawn some hasty conclusion of this sort, and that a partial reliance upon your moral character has betrayed you beyond the depth of your understanding. . . . Lord Bute found no resource of dependence or security in the proud imposing superiority of Lord Chatham’s abilities, the shrewd inflexible judgment of Mr Grenville, nor in the mild but determined integrity of Lord Rockingham. His views and situation required a creature void of all these properties ; and he was forced to go through every division, resolution, composition, and refinement of political chemistry, before he happily arrived at the *caput mortuum* of vitriol in your grace. Flat and insipid in your retired state, but, brought into action, you become vitriol again,” &c.

This Brobdingnagian strain took the reader of a day which had been used to see contempt one of the favourite vehicles for wit. Nobody passed muster who had not miscalled somebody in swelling and noisy

periods. For us, we can't admire one sort of sound hearty vituperation much more than another. There is a decided likeness, for example, between all this talk of vitriol and villainy, and the mode and terms adopted by a certain virago, celebrated by De Quincey as affording diversion to Coleridge and his set, to express her contempt of her husband: Junius allowing his public to read the *letter*, she courting hers through the superscription. Doubtless because her husband had ceased to open her letters, she hit upon the plan of expressing her opinion of him upon the cover, and would address him through the post-office in such periphrases as, "To that supreme of rogues that looks the hang-dog that he is, Doctor (such a doctor!) Andrew Bell!" Or, "To that ape of apes, and knave of knaves, who is recorded to have once paid a debt—but a small one, you may be sure—in fact, it was 4½d. Had it been on the other side of 6d., he must have died before he could have achieved so dreadful a sacrifice." An effective hyperbole certainly, as well relished probably by its readers, and inflicting as sharp a sting on its victim, as the more laboured invective which precedes it. There is force in both the stilted and the grotesque. They are provoked by a real need of expression in opposition to the flatter vituperation to which the ears of our own generation are accustomed.

The grotesque in all its branches is made up of hyperbole. Our youth is trained to it in the pantomime, where alone is any deliberate attempt made to

produce the figure visibly and in action ; though we may be used enough to undesigned and serious monstrosities of disproportion, typified in the idolatry of that ancient people who worshipped a fly and sacrificed an ox to it ; or in the crime of that learned, and amiable as learned, French antiquary, who murdered his best friend to become possessed of a medal, without which his collection was incomplete. It is the inexhaustible resource of the circus, where by no means the worst hyperboles are to be met with ; the figure owing its success, as we see in American humour, to a fine natural vein rather than to a polished cultivation. The wit of the clown introduces a simple audience to intellectual exercises, of which their common life is too bare, and so serves an educational purpose. The mouth he knows, that is wider than from y'ear to y'ear, for it is from here to yonder, is a difficult idea for even a practised intelligence to catch and make its own ; but the effort does something, inducting the infant and the rustic into abstractions.

There are sensations and impressions that can only be adequately apprehended by hyperbole, by a bold paradox, which critics of the narrower sort denounce as absurdity. We mean where the thing to be described is a negation, incapable of an active existence, yet to be realised must be imaged as possessing life and action. Dryden was persecuted with perpetual ridicule for his lines—

“ A horrid *stillness* first *invades* the ear,
And in that silence we a tempest fear.”

Yet he hits his mark by shooting beyond it. And no imagination can treat of silence so as to convey the idea of it and satisfy the ear's experience of its effect upon the brain without a similar violence to vulgar sense. Thus Wordsworth writes—

“The silent hills and *more than silent skies* ;”

and Sydney Smith of those *flashes* of silence which made Macaulay's talk so much more agreeable than it had been before they illuminated his eloquence.

We began by commenting on the popular tendency to exaggeration in familiar discourse, the endeavour of our sprightly youth to impart vivacity to their style by the use of a tried and universally popular formula. There we think them on a wrong tack. By all means, we say, let them be forcible, and hyperbolically forcible if they will; but what we have desired, and bring to their notice is, that all hyperbole that really pleases is an immediate effort of the fancy, that there is no common stock of hyperboles with a monopoly to please, and that those who affect them, if they would win credit, must follow Acre's system with his oaths, and strike them off fresh and appropriate to the occasion.

HYMNS OF THE POPULACE.

IT is a notorious difficulty for one class to put itself into the position of another, to adopt its tone of feeling, to comprehend its leading motives of action, its distinctive prejudices, prepossessions, and impulses ; its likes and dislikes, and those constant pervading influences which form character, and lie at the root of the differences which separate order from order, and keep them at such an impassable distance from real intimacy. High and low, gentlemen and artisans, master and servant, ladies and poor folks, encounter one another at certain points and in particular relations ; but the most discerning cannot pretend to see into one another much beyond their point of contact. Employers, clergymen, benevolent visitors, carry their own atmosphere with them wherever they go, and things are seen and coloured through its medium. In their presence mutual interests are discussed from a non-natural point of view. The minds of both parties relax out of a certain tension and artificial condition

when removed from the contact and espionage of an unsympathising witness. This implies no design, no deception of any kind, probably no knowledge of check or impediment to a more perfect understanding. It is only that neither party can display any large or clear picture of themselves where the mind, to be informed, is so ill prepared to receive a comprehensive idea. Hence an inevitable mutual reticence. The superior must keep back something from the defendant; the most devoted pastor has an easy privacy he does not desire to admit his poorer flock into; the lady does not care that the humble object of her bounty should be able to picture her in the unrestraint of her drawing-room life; and in like manner the labourer, the "hand," the good woman that stands before her kindly visitant garrulously detailing her list of sorrows and grievances, have each an inner world from which it is impossible to lift up the curtain, or let in full daylight, so as to reveal all the motives, interests, notions, pains, and pleasures, which make up an individual and family life so hopelessly different in a thousand points from that unconsciously contrasted with it.

In spite of this difficulty, it is a favourite exercise of fancy to picture the life of classes with which the delineator has none of the knowledge that comes of experience. In depicting the poor, for instance, writers construct scenes of vivid interest. They carefully record provincialisms and grammatical solecisms; they go into detail, coarse, homely, or simple, as it may be, with a marvellous confidence of knowing their ground.

And all the while they are the victims of illusions. We see two men of equal powers for the work, and similar opportunities, arrive at diametrically opposite conclusions, according to their prepossessions ; and all for want of a key. They know nothing of the world they affect to be familiar with from mere partial outside contact. They would not know how to account for those distinct and often opposing standards in morals ; for the tolerance and the intolerance of public opinion which we observe in the class called “the poor” ; for the position of women, and its points of greater independence under a seeming subjugation of brute force ; for the different models of what is attractive or excellent. They have no clue to the tastes and antipathies which constitute the barrier we indicate between poor and rich, and which, once entertained, once rendered by habit a part of nature, can never be wholly eradicated ; so that the humbly-born, who have risen in the world, whatever their powers, opportunities, or success in life, can never see things with the eyes of those about them, can never rid themselves of the old impressions—harden their hearts as they will against the memories of childhood, or struggle as they may from better motives to forget. Of course, so far as men act on the highest principles, they must be alike. The model king, subject, landlord, tenant, tradesman, and mechanic, noble virgin and simple cottage maiden, can all meet on a perfect understanding. There is but one highest motive. It is when motives of earth set in that confusion arises. It is the different alloys

infused into our virtues by pride, vanity, selfishness, envy, jealousy, according to the calls upon them, that separate families and classes, and that give to each not only their distinctive faults, but their picturesque characteristics.

“The low light gives the colour,”

and character is made out of the presence of, or the temptation to, human error, and the degrees in which it is yielded to or resisted.

If this difficulty of a perfect understanding exists between all well-defined classes, it follows that the wider the difference of social standing, the greater the difficulty. This will, perhaps, be disputed, for many persons profess to find it much easier to enter into the mind of the very poor than of the class above them, less dependent on their favour and support. But mere recipients have hardly arrived at the dignity of an order. They are not a class, but rather the *débris* of a class, or the matter out of which a class is to rise. They are understood in the degree in which they do not presume to possess an independent judgment, or habits of reflection which might perchance run counter to their betters. When people profess to understand the poor, they ought to consider how far the understanding goes. Do they realise the condition they think they sympathise with, or perceive what is latent and ready to spring into life at a moment's warning under any change of circumstances? We repeat, it is in proportion to the real distance in habits and aspir-

ations that the ignorance dwelt upon prevails. The gentleman is further removed from the man whose family are reduced to herd together in one bedroom, and who is thankful for a shilling—however humbly acquiescent and sincerely willing to assimilate every thought to the opinion of the great man who is kind to him and is master over him—than from the self-sufficient cocky small shopkeeper, who can house his family decently, and has notions of rising in the world. They have more thoughts, hopes, and impulses in common. They can reckon more nearly on each other's course of action under changed circumstances.

One reason for this is, that as classes rise in importance they have their organs, and acquire the art of self-portraiture. While people are described by their betters a vast deal must remain behind, and what is made prominent nullified by the omission; but no person can take pen in hand and describe himself without our learning a great deal about him. It may not be what he intends us to learn, but it is knowledge nevertheless. It is not easy to get at the self-portraiture of the very poor or the very ignorant and rude class, or the class perhaps neither one nor the other, whose ambition has not yet taken the direction of making an outside reputation for itself. Now it is because it throws light on these unrepresented classes that our present subject possesses an interest to us wholly out of proportion with—we ought perhaps to say entirely independent of—poetical or literary merit.

A body of hymns of a widespread popularity, yet to be found in no collection with which our reader is familiar, and procurable in no shop he is likely to frequent, may have their point of interest independent of our approval of matter or style. When these are illustrated by autobiographical notices of one of their chief promulgators, himself of the unrepresented class, hymns and man sufficiently vigorous and characteristic, we need not apologise for calling the attention to them of such as find their curiosity stimulated by all popular demonstrations ; who cannot pass a "Gospel theatre" without speculating on the feelings at work in all that tumult, or hear "Fiddling Jem" hailed by an expectant crowd as he approaches the closed doors in grim respectability, without a curiosity to know how he will acquit himself ; who, if they encounter in any of our large towns a marching band of obstreperous religionists, try in vain to catch the words of the noisy strain, or if they observe a street preacher holding the attention of a "lot of roughs," would fain know where he got his training and aptitude for the work ; who have a hankering to know more, and a feeling less cold than mere contempt, even toward the notices on the walls which invite them to go and hear the "celebrated boy-preacher" who will address an audience from such a place, or Miss So-and-so, who will preach three times on the following Sunday ; or Jack Birch the converted nigger-singer, and Jem Jones the converted dog-fighter (we quote verbatim), who will hold special services in such a room, with the additional attraction and sphere

for speech-making of the “sweeps’ tea-meeting” in the course of the week.

One apology is necessary before plunging into our subject. Of all virtues reverence needs the most careful fostering, and the people who delight in these hymns and the gatherings where they are sung, as a rule were born and have lived under no such fostering influence. So much as a matter of fact does reverence go along with training, education, and cultivation of the taste, that it may be treated in part as an intellectual quality. The child whose earliest acquaintance with the name of God is through the medium of oaths and blasphemies, who is familiar with scenes of brutal violence, whose innocence was tainted by precocious knowledge of evil, can hardly under any change of feeling, under conversion itself, be reverent according to our standard; and, indeed, without this contact with gross evil, the mere life among crowds, the hindrances in the way of all privacy, the want of solitude, are fatal to that awe which is the sentiment earliest infused into the religiously trained child of the educated classes. Again, the premature introduction to a participation in the business of life which belongs to the children of the poor, gives them confidence and self-reliance; while the apology for education which is all they receive, falls utterly short of imparting that insight into their own ignorance which is the great enlightenment of more fortunate youth. Such considerations as these will, we hope, tend to charity. That, for example, religious people should

find the following hymn, evidently a great favourite, and conspicuous in all this numerous class of collections, edifying as well as inspiriting, that they should accept it in a serious spirit, needs, we feel, some accounting for :—

“ Whene’er we meet you always say,
 What’s the news, what’s the news ?
 Pray what’s the order of the day ?
 What’s the news, what’s the news ?
 Oh ! I have got good news to tell,
 My Saviour hath done all things well,
 And triumphed over death and hell,
 That’s the news, that’s the news !

The Lamb was slain on Calvary,
 That’s the news, that’s the news !
 To set a world of sinners free,
 That’s the news, that’s the news !
 ’Twas there His precious blood was shed,
 ’Twas there on Him our sins were laid,
 And now He’s risen from the dead,
 That’s the news, that’s the news !

His work’s reviving all around,
 That’s the news, that’s the news !
 And many have salvation found,
 That’s the news, that’s the news !
 And since their souls have caught the flame,
 They shout Hosanna to His name,
 And all around they spread His fame,
 That’s the news, that’s the news !

The Lord hath pardoned all my sin,
 That’s the news, that’s the news !
 I have the witness now within,
 That’s the news, that’s the news !
 And since He took my sins away,
 And taught me how to watch and pray,
 I’m happy now from day to day,
 That’s the news, that’s the news !

And Christ the Lord can save you too,

That's the news, that's the news !

Your sinful heart He can renew,

That's the news, that's the news !

This moment, if for sin you grieve,

This moment, if you do believe,

A full acquittal you'll receive,

That's the news, that's the news !

And then, if any one should say,

What's the news, what's the news ?

Oh ! tell them you've begun to pray,

That's the news, that's the news !

That you have joined the conquering band,

And now with joy at God's command

You're marching to the better land,

That's the news, that's the news !"

—Richard Weaver's *Hymn-Book*.

Or another, in equal favour, which indicates in such free and easy terms the period of conversion :—

" Come, ye that fear the Lord, unto me ;

I've something good to say

About the narrow way,

For Christ, the other day, saved my soul.

He gave me first to see what I was ;

He gave me first to see

My guilt and misery,

And then He set me free. Bless His name !

My old companions said, ' He's undone ; '

My old companions said,

' He's surely going mad ; '

But Jesus makes me glad. Bless His name !

Oh, if they did but know what I feel ;

Had they got eyes to see

Their guilt and misery,

They'd be as mad as me, I believe.

Some said, ' He'll soon give o'er, you shall see ; '

But time has passed away

Since I began to pray,

And I feel His love to-day. Bless His name !

And now I'm going home to the Lord,
 And now I'm going home ;
 Guilty sinner, wilt thou come,
 Or meet an awful doom, from the Lord ?”

—Richard Weaver's *Hymn-Book*.

Or the far lower depth, to outside ears, reached in the collection compiled for the “Hallelujah Band,” where a few solemn words are played upon with a flippant iteration shocking to our ears, but regarded as a legitimate stimulus in these assemblages where excitement passes for devotion :—

“ Come to Jesus, come to Jesus,
 Come to Jesus just now ;
 Just now come to Jesus,
 Come to Jesus just now.

He will save you, He will save you,
 He will save you just now ;
 Just now He will save you,
 He will save you just now.

O believe Him, O believe Him,
 O believe Him just now ;
 Just now O believe Him,
 O believe Him just now.

Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
 Hallelujah, Amen ;
 Amen, Hallelujah,
 Hallelujah, Amen.”

“ I'm glad I am converted, I'm glad I am converted,
 I'm glad I am converted before my dying day,
 Before my dying day, before my dying day ;
 I'm glad I am converted before my dying day.

And you may be converted, and you may be converted, &c.

I feel His blood convert me, I feel His blood convert me, &c.

I've glory, glory in my soul, I've glory, glory in my soul,” &c.

Yet Richard Weaver, whose taste in hymns upon this showing is so questionable, is in himself a person very far above contempt, and in prose has now and then a knack in expressing himself that a good many of us might envy. The title in which he glories, and by which he is known in his religious world, is “the Converted Collier”; and what he was, as well as what he is, is his perpetually recurring theme, and one which evidently costs him no effort. For what we have said of reverence applies in a great measure also to repentance with this class. Shame, properly speaking, there is none, in the lavish confessions of these stalwart sinners; and for the reason that the preacher gains rather than loses in the estimation of his hearers by the magnitude of his errors. Wonder is the especial delight of the vulgar, and grace attracts them most by what they regard as its crowning miracles. A lady asked one of her maids why she would walk four miles to hear a rousing preacher, when the parish clergyman was so good; the reply was, “They say he was an awfu’ bad man once.” There is, we cannot doubt, a secret sense of power in Richard Weaver, in that he capped the companions of his sinful days as much in oaths, fighting, and general blackguardism as he now rises above them as a man sought after and wondered at by pious crowds. And, moreover, he cannot but feel that his training in the coal-pit, and the furious relish with which he threw himself into such pleasures and enjoyments as come in the way of drunken colliers, do give him a swing

and impetus that what he calls “systematic and grammatical preachers” miss in their retrospect. More especially do denunciations come easy, and the terrors of the judgment, to a man over whose lips oaths once flowed like water in the running brook.

Our readers can hardly form a just idea of this brand before it was snatched from the burning but from his own words taken down from his addresses :—

“Many of you are saying, ‘I wish I was as happy as you.’ Well, I wish you were ; and I’ll tell you what makes *me* happy, and what would make *you* happy too. If you had seen me ten years ago, you would have seen a man with bloodshot eyes and bloated face, a drunkard and blasphemer—a man with brutish passions and bloody hands—a man too bad for earth, and almost too bad for hell, but not too bad for the arms of Christ. If anything was needed from us, what had I to bring ?—nothing but dice, and boxing-gloves, and game-cocks, and fighting-dogs.”

“Richard had a blaspheming father,” a “praying mother,” and the trials, courage, and endurance of this good woman are amongst the edifying and pathetic pictures of this strange history. Where society is used to brutality, the sufferers from it in each case are clearly not as crushed by circumstances as where there is disgrace attached. His “leaflets” are full of the trials of poor ill-used women, amongst whom his mother, “the old woman in Shropshire,” stands conspicuous.

“I was at a meeting some time ago, and I heard a young man tell his experience. He said, ‘I was brought up by a praying mother, but I took no notice of that praying mother ; when she has been reading the Bible I have seen my father stand over her with a weapon in his hand, and threaten to split her head in two.

At the age of about fifteen I began to get into company with other bad boys of my own age, and I neglected the advice of my praying mother. At sixteen years of age I took to drinking and dancing, and at seventeen I went home one night after I had been fighting, and my mother saw me with two black eyes. Her poor heart seemed almost broken, and she began to pray for the Lord to bless me ; I felt like a wild beast, and I said I would murder her if she did not give over praying.

“After I had gone to bed, she came to my room ; she knelt at the bedside, and I jumped out of bed, and, seizing her by her grey hairs, swore I would murder her if she prayed any more for me. She exclaimed, “Lord, though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee. It is hard work, my child raising up his hand against his mother ; but, Lord, though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee.” My mother’s prayers followed me into the public-house, and I began to fight, but my mother still kept praying for God to bless me, and those prayers hurt me more than the man’s fists. I came home drunk one day, and when I got up-stairs took a razor, and took off my neckerchief to get at my throat, but my mother’s prayers came between me and suicide. Another time I went into a harlot’s dwelling, and while there nearly murdered her. I fastened a rope round her neck, and threw it over a beam and strung her up to it, and if it had not been for a young man who heard her cries, and rushed in and cut her down, she would have been killed.’ [Then follows in brief a history of the young man’s conversion.] That young man was Richard Weaver, and he is in the pulpit of Union Street Chapel, in Rochdale, to-night.”
—*Voice from the Coal-pit*, p. 16.

It is clear that nothing in his own class could surprise Mr Weaver, that there is no mob, no assemblage of waifs and strays, into whose component parts experience would not give him a very fair insight, and that in the first accost of a dozen idle lads at a street corner, he would have that advantage over the curate which acquaintance with his audience gives. From his showing, the youth of his own calling have a jolly life of it. Such a world as they know and

care for is all their own ; and if conscience does not hinder, nothing else hinders a career of wild dissipation and expense. "I have sung," he says, "as much as £14 out of my pocket at one spree." He describes a pair of twin brothers so pugnacious that if they could find nobody else to fight with, they fought with one another, one of whom had paid £50 in fines for drunkenness. He counts up the dogs, cocks, pigeons, &c., &c., kept by his unconverted companions ; and tells of a young friend, a good dancer, who was withheld from chapel, to which he invited him, by an engagement to dance for £5 a-side to be spent afterwards in one spree. We are left with an impression of wild exulting pleasure in mere health and strength, which the discipline of education certainly keeps under. The physical advantages of wealth and training are found in the autumn of our age. In life, as in gardens, they fill the autumn with flowers. In spring the cottage garden often flaunts in gayer colours than the lady's parterre.

It follows, after the manner of all reformers, that every pleasure which this desperate young sinner once recklessly engaged in, is summarily denounced, and with very little classification. The adulterer and the pigeon-fancier are warned in one sentence ; and dancing, ball-hopping, and race-running merely precipitate their devotees on with headlong speed the way to perdition. In fact, he allows no other relaxations than those sufficient for himself—preaching, hymn-singing, and autobiography. In this, per-

haps, he only follows high precedent. Nor does learning come off much better than accomplishments under his handling. Grammar he clearly considers an unauthorised medium between God and the soul. It is thus classed with system as a weapon of the adversary :—

“ Not many people can endure the truth at the present time ; the systematical grammar-speaker is most admired ; and if he talks about the beauties of nature, the green fields and the stars, people say, ‘ Oh what a good preacher he is ! I was quite lost while listening to his well-arranged sentences. How fine are his ideas ! I was so much taken up with the preacher, that when I got home I had entirely forgotten his subject.’ If he had told you something about yourselves, you would not have forgot what he said. If we begin to talk about hell and say, ‘ He that believeth not shall be damned,’ you will know something about that.”

In these passages, taken down as exactly as a rapid utterance allows, a friend has clearly taken the liberty to correct those solecisms the speaker regards as a mark of grace. As he puts it there is perhaps something in his charge. The approved preaching of many a modern pulpit dwells very little on the invitations and promises which represent the Gospel to the poor. A preacher is not the less fitted for most congregations, whose feeling towards unbelief is simple contempt, who sets down the sceptic without affecting the smallest sympathy with his difficulties.

“ The very first cry of a collier, when in danger, is, ‘ Lord, have mercy upon me.’ I’ve seen lots of sceptics in the coal-pit, and all their infidelity knocked out of them by a clod falling on their back from the roof of their working. You might deny God’s

Word, but what can we get better if you take that away? Give me something to comfort me better, and I'll burn my Bible."

Our collier has one theme with which he is very sincerely possessed, and this is a great power. We do not say that his teaching is the teaching of the Bible—very far from it; but the man possessed by one great truth is apt to say striking things. Take the following passage, failing in reverence we admit, but holding attention where attention is not always easy to gain :—

"Suppose I could be privileged to go to heaven to-night, and tell them I wanted to know what the love of Christ is, that I might come back and tell poor sinners in St Martin's Hall about it. Suppose I asked Abel, 'Abel, thou hast been here thousands of years, canst thou tell me what the love of Christ is?' He would say, 'No, Richard Weaver, thou poor blood-washed sinner, I cannot tell thee what this love is.' But 'God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Then if I turn and say, 'Noah, thou wert saved in the ark, canst thou tell me what the love of Christ is?' 'No,' he would reply, 'I cannot tell thee; but it is deeper than the waters that carried me upon their bosom.' And yet, 'God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' I go to David, and say, 'Thou sweet Psalmist of Israel, canst thou tell me the measure of the love of God?' 'No,' says David, 'His loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Him; but I cannot fathom the love of God.' And then I go to Solomon, 'O Solomon, who spakest of trees from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall, thou couldst show thy wisdom to the queen of Sheba, canst thou tell me what the love of Christ is?' 'No, I cannot tell thee; it is beyond all my wisdom.' And then my guardian angel says, 'See, here is Ezekiel; maybe he can tell thee.' And I say, 'Well, Ezekiel, thou didst see visions, and dreams, and the Spirit lifted thee up to behold the glory of God; tell me how I can make these sin-blighted people in St Martin's Hall understand the love of God.'

'Come along with me, I'll show thee something about it,' and he brings me to a river-side ; the water just covers my ankles, but it rises higher and higher. 'Stop, Ezekiel ; the water is up to my knees.' 'Come along,' says the old prophet, 'don't be afraid.' 'Oh, but, Ezekiel, it's a river up to my loins.' On we go a few steps farther. 'Hold, stop, Ezekiel ; I've lost my footing ; I'm altogether out of my depth.' 'Yes, Richard Weaver, it's waters to swim in—a river that cannot be passed over.' But here comes the loving disciple. 'Now, John, thou who didst lean on the bosom of thy Lord, thou man whom Jesus loved, what hast thou to say about the love of God ?' 'I cannot tell thee how great it is, but "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." But, no doubt, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, who was caught up into the third heaven and heard 'unspeakable words, which it is not possible for a man to utter,' can tell us something about the love of Christ. 'Now, Paul, what have you to say about this love ?' 'I cannot tell the height, and length, and depth, and breadth of the love of Christ.' 'But I want to go and tell the sinners in St Martin's Hall what the redeemed in glory know about the love of God.' 'Tell them we cannot tell what it is.' 'I will go and tell them—' 'Stop,' cries Paul, 'tell them the love of Christ passeth knowledge.' But 'God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Ah, glory be to God, that is it ! May the Lord help us to think about it. 'The love of Christ passeth knowledge.'"

Take again a power of realising the narrative of Scripture unborrowed from Stanley or Rénan, and guiltless of local colouring :—

"I imagine I see a little boy tripping up the street of a certain town, singing, 'Hosanna to the Son of David !' A poor afflicted woman stands on her doorstep and hears the child. 'What is that you say ?' she asks, as he is passing by her house. 'Oh,' says he, 'haven't you heard about Jesus of Nazareth ? He's cured blind Bartimeus that used to sit at the wayside begging ; and he has raised a young man to life that was being carried to his grave ; and healed ten lepers all at once ; and the people that have sick relations bring them and lay them at His feet, and He

cures them all. And those who have no friends to bring them, if they can only just touch Him, are made perfectly whole. ‘Oh,’ cried the poor woman, ‘if that’s true, He can cure my bloody issue that I’ve been tormented with these twelve years. When will He be here, my little man?’ ‘Why,’ says the child, ‘He’ll be here directly. He’s coming this way. There! don’t you hear the noise of the multitude? Look! here they come. Hosanna! hosanna! to the Son of David!’ and away goes the little boy to tell his mother that the prophet she has taught him to look for is come at last. ‘Well, I’ll go,’ says the poor thing, timidly. ‘I’ll get behind Him. Maybe He won’t pity me; but that dear little lad said as many as touched Him were made whole: I’ll go and try, however.’ I imagine I see the poor weak creature, who has spent all her living on physicians that only made her worse, drawing her tattered shawl around her and wriggling her way through the crowd. They push her aside, but she says, ‘I’ll try again.’ She winds to the right, then to the left, now nearer, and the next minute farther off than ever. But still she perseveres, although she seems to have so little chance of getting through the throng, which is thickest round the Man she wants. Well done, poor woman! Try again; it’s for your life, you know. That bloody issue will be your death if you don’t get it cured, and a touch of His clothes will do it. I imagine I hear one rudely ask the fainting creature, ‘Where are you pushing to? You’ve got a bloody issue; you’ve no business here.’ ‘Ah,’ she answers, ‘I see there a man whose like I never saw before. Let me but touch his garment, and I shall be as well as any of you.’ And now another step or two, and she can hear His gentle voice speaking kindly to Jairus, as He walks home with him to heal his little daughter lying at the point of death. The woman stretches out her hand, but she isn’t near enough. Another step—yes, now she touches—it is but the hem of His garment; but it is all she needs. Glory to Jesus! her issue of blood is dried, and immediately she feels in her body that she is healed. Glory to Jesus! she touched, and was made perfectly whole. And if there was virtue in His garment, isn’t there efficacy in His blood? May God help you to come to Christ to-night.”

This is better than the poetry that would precede and follow our passage in its first delivery. But per-

haps the best hymn marked by the characteristics of revivalism in these collections may follow here. It is called Richard Weaver's favourite :—

“ My heart is fixed, eternal God, fixed on Thee,
 And my immortal choice is made, Christ for me.
 He is my Prophet, Priest, and King,
 Who did for me salvation bring,
 And while I've breath I mean to sing, Christ for me.

In Him I see the Godhead shine, Christ for me.
 He is the Majesty Divine, Christ for me,
 The Father's well-beloved Son,
 Co-partner of His royal throne,
 Who did for human guilt atone, Christ for me.

To-day as yesterday the same, Christ for me.
 How precious is His balmy name, Christ for me.
 Christ a mere man may answer you
 Who error's winding path pursue ;
 But I with part can never do, Christ for me.

Let others boast of heaps of gold, Christ for me.
 His riches never can be told, Christ for me.
 Your gold will waste and wear away,
 Your honours perish in a day.
 My portion never can decay, Christ for me.

In pining sickness or in health, Christ for me.
 In deepest poverty or wealth, Christ for me,
 And in that all-important day,
 When I the summons must obey
 And pass from this dark world away, Christ for me.

At home, abroad, by night and day, Christ for me.
 Whene'er I preach, or sing, or pray, Christ for me.
 Him first and last, Him all day long,
 My hope, my solace, and my song ;
 Convince me if you think I'm wrong : Christ for me.

Now who can sing my song and say, Christ for me ?
 My life and truth, my light and way, Christ for me.
 Can you, old men and women there,
 With furrowed cheeks and silvery hair,
 Now from your inmost soul declare, Christ for me ?

Can you, young men and maidens, say, Christ for me?
 Him will I love, and Him obey, Christ for me !
 Then here's my heart and here's my hand,
 We'll form a little singing band,
 And shout aloud throughout the land, Christ for me !”

One common method for attracting attention is the spiritualising of sights and employments most familiar to the audience. Soldiers, sailors, volunteers, find their callings all turned into parables. One writer tries his hand at the railroad with but indifferent success. It belongs to few to keep their parallels straight in such an undertaking. It will be observed that repentance—a state of mind never thoroughly realised—has to perform two different offices.

“The line to heaven by Christ was made,
 With heavenly truths the rails were laid ;
 From earth to heaven the line extends,
 To life eternal, where it ends.

The Lamb, the Lamb, the bleeding Lamb ;
 I love the sound of Jesu's name ;
 It sets my spirit in a flame.
 Glory to the bleeding Lamb !

Repentance is the station then
 Where passengers are taken in ;
 No fee for them is there to pay,
 For Jesus is Himself the way.

The Bible is the engineer ;
 It points the way to heaven so clear ;
 Through tunnels dark and dreary here,
 It doth the way to heaven steer.

In first, and second, and third class—
 Repentance, faith, and holiness—
 You must the way to glory gain,
 Or you with Christ can never reign.

Come then, poor sinner, now's the time ;
At any station on the line,
If you'll repent and turn from sin,
The train will stop and take you in."

There is energy in Richard Weaver's parable founded on the same theme :—

"Come and stand with me at the Bluepits station. The engine is whistling, and the steam flying. You see a man waving a red flag, and you ask, 'What is the matter?' You are told that there are two trains approaching on the same line. 'What must be done?' Every stroke of the engine cries, 'Death! death! death!' The signalman runs with the red flag this way and that way, and every moment brings the two trains nearer together. There is coming death in every stroke. The pointsman rushes forward to see if he can change the position of the two trains. You cry out to him, '*Run! Run! RUN!*' He reaches the points, pulls the handle, the nearest train is turned on the other line of rails, the danger is averted, and the lives of those in the trains are preserved. But as the engine dashes by the pointsman, he is caught and cut to pieces. He has saved those lives at the expense of his own. The decree has gone forth that 'the wages of sin is death'; but, thank God, Jesus Christ, the pointsman of heaven, rushed forward, and, by the sacrifice of His own life, has redeemed us."

We have heard that Weaver has his great titled friends; that he has been invited to dine at rich men's tables, and shown at once his sense and humility in preferring the kitchen to the parlour on these occasions. That many with means at their command were glad to assist him with their substance, we gather from an anecdote which tells of a hearer, unknown to him, who once paid for his journey, and offered him further assistance, to whom his thankfulness was thus expressed :—

"I could not help then telling him what a Father mine was. It was just like Him. I asked Him for a pound, and He gave me five-and-twenty shillings."

Yet we can understand his mistrust and jealousy of a well-dressed congregation. He does not like to see the women among his audience in silks and ribbons, but with "shawls drawn over their heads." In fact, none will do for him who associate religion with ideas of awe, solitude, and quiet. As the people he preaches to live, work, amuse themselves in crowds and droves, so must they gain their religion. Nothing is more demonstrative than a collier under conviction. Even if, impelled by conscience, one rushes alone to a "sand-pit" or the solitude of the upper room by day, his cries and roarings must attract a large assemblage of anxious and impressed hearers at the foot of the stairs or somewhere within hearing. Where noise and loud utterance is a mark of conversion, we may take for granted that witnesses are essential. Nobody halloos for his own solitary edification. The drunken blasphemer, suddenly awakened, upon opening a hymn-book, bawls out, "I've found it! I've found it!" with an energy that might wake the dead. Everybody sings, everybody shouts, everybody assembles all his friends. They are converted in company. The larger the number—of whomsoever composed—the greater the proportion of converts. Richard Weaver, sincere though we believe him, has no better test than noise of effectual conversion. Until people shout they are doubtful. To die "shouting" expresses, in brief, all

there is to be said. A good woman, who had borne a trying illness under trying circumstances with pious but quiet resignation, was considered unsatisfactory by her friends of this school; till, worked upon by their exciting language, at the moment of death she yielded to pressure. This put the seal of assurance upon her state. All was right. "She had hollered a deal." Repugnant as all this is to ourselves, we are forced to draw distinctions. Take colliers, for instance. They live in noise; their work passes in it; their pleasures are riotous; silence and self-restraint are things they do not understand, and very much akin in the minds of most of them to deadness. Whether this is over-tolerance or not, let us listen to some of the strains, through which sound is sustained at a maximum—

" O God, my heart with love inflame,
That I may in Thy holy name
Aloud in songs of praise rejoice
While I have breath to raise my voice !
Then will I shout, then will I sing,
I'll make the heavenly arches ring ;
I'll sing and shout for evermore,
On that eternal happy shore."

Shouting is of itself a means of grace, and we must say the only one enlarged upon—

" You've no need to carry your burden of grief,
Nor one moment tarry in seeking relief ;
It is yours, it is yours, whilst you're raising your voice,
And the angels look down to rejoice."

Shouting is the motive for the converted to assemble themselves together, and the inducement to the unconverted to join them—

"The Gospel band has now set out, Glory to the bleeding Lamb,
And we will help them all to shout, Glory to the bleeding Lamb!"

It is a point of difference between the saved and lost in the hymn, in universal favour, which asks of each and all, "How will you do?"—

"When you come to Jordan's flood, How will you do?
You who now contemn your God, How will you do?
Death will be a solemn day:
When the soul is forced away,
It will be too late to pray! How will you do?
You who laugh and scorn and sneer, How will you do? &c.
You who have no more than form, How will you do? &c.
You who have been turned aside, How will you do? &c.
Christian, now I turn to thee, How wilt thou do?
When thou dost the river see, How wilt thou do?
To the Cross I then will cling,
Shout, O death, where is thy sting?
Victory! Victory! I will sing—That's how I'll do!"

No hymn does its work without a lusty chorus. We come upon familiar lines, associated in our minds with all the sweet decorums of orderly worship, and are startled by the appendage thought necessary to bring them up to the mark the contrivers of these meetings aim at sustaining, of excitement and noise. A really beautiful hymn of Watts has every verse thus supplemented—

"There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign,
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.
We're marching through Emmanuel's ground
And soon shall hear the trumpet sound,

And then we shall with Jesus reign,
 And never, never part again.
 What ! never part again ? No, never part again ;
 And then we shall with Jesus reign,
 And never, never part again.
 There everlasting spring abides," &c.

One of Cowper's meets with the same treatment each verse separated from the context :—

" I do believe, I will believe, that Jesus died for me ;
 That on the cross He shed His blood, from sin to set me free."

Another familiar friend is graced with this appendage :—

" I mean to go, I want to go, I mean to go I do ;
 I mean to go where Jesus is, and you may go there too."

A very favourite chorus is—

" Let us never mind the scoffs nor the frowns of the world,
 For we all have the cross to bear ;
 It will only make the crown the brighter to shine,
 When we have the crown to wear."

One hymn has this refrain—

" We're bound for the land of the pure and the holy,
 The home of the happy, the kingdom of love ;
 Ye wanderers from God in the broad road of folly,
 Oh say, will you go to the Eden above ?
 Will you go, will you go, will you go, will you go ?
 Oh say, will you go to the Eden above ?"

There are dozens more, making still more free with the most sacred names and mysteries—these we spare our readers ; but all shows what we have already said. The conductors of these services know that if a "rough" is to be a saint, he will prefer being a noisy saint. To bring such a one to church, prayer-book in hand, is indeed to make of him a new man.

The transformation is by no means so startling under Richard Weaver's auspices, who instinctively knows that quiet, order, gravity, subdued tones, measured utterances—all that such men associate with worldly respectability—is, and ever will be, intolerable to them; and that a religion that enjoins roaring and tumult, and which opens a wider, if a fresh field, for the exercise of vigour, pluck, and self-assertion, even to insolence—a religion which sets them shouting at street corners and market-places,—and which rather diverts the old stream of bad language into new channels than forbids it altogether,—meets the sinner half-way. And so does their ideal of repentance. It is to be very violent, and to involve profuse perspiration and a great deal of shouting, but it is to be short. What can be more summary, for example, than the course recommended in “Isaac Barnes’s chorus”—

“ Let us tell Him *in brief* that of sinners we’re chief.”

Again—

“ With a sorrow for sin let repentance begin,
Then conversion of course will draw nigh ;
But till washed in the blood of a crucified Lord,
We shall never be ready to die.
For I’m happy all the day,
Since He washed my sins away,
And He’s graciously waiting to wash more.”

What can more effectually smooth over the ugly circumstances of a disorderly past than that hymn to be found in all these collections denouncing every effort which falls short of the ideal conversion as “ deadly doing ”?—

" Nothing, either great or small,
 Nothing, sinner, no ;
 Jesus did it, did it all,
 Long, long ago.

When He from His lofty throne
 Stooped to do and die,
 Everything was fully done,
 Hearken to His cry—

' It is finished.' Yes, indeed,
 Finished every jot :
 Sinner, this is all you need ;
 Tell me, is it not ?

Weary, working, plodding one,
 Wherefore toil you so ?
 Cease your doing : all was done
 Long, long ago.

Till to Jesu's work you cling
 By a simple faith,
 'Doing' is a deadly thing,
 Doing ends in death.

Cast your deadly 'doing' down,
 Down at Jesu's feet ;
 Stand in Him, in Him alone,
 Gloriously complete."

A large body of the persons who frequent these meetings on Sunday are such as have habitually rejected every invitation to public worship, who, as one man expressed it, "make a practice of going nowhere." The order of any established service is intolerable to them; but under the pressure of trial and sickness, poverty or depression, they will drop in to hear what is going on at a Temperance-hall, or listen to a street-preacher. With them this modified conformity is as much a case of "deadly doing" as the most ceremonious worship of that ideal formalist

who is the bugbear of this theology. They are better satisfied with themselves when it is over without any good reason for being so. They may have heard themselves called sinners in good company, thus—

“ Is there anybody here like weeping Mary ?
 Call to my Jesus and He’ll draw nigh ;
 Oh glory, glory, hallelujah !
 Glory be to God who rules on high !
 Is there anybody here like sinking Peter ?
 Is there anybody here like blind Bartimeus ?
 Is there anybody here like faithless Thomas ?
 Is there anybody here that wants salvation ? ”

And they are pretty certain to hear much of Canaan in hymns which take for granted that all who sing them will go to heaven. Of all faiths this is the most natural in the religion of the poor. *The Sunday-school lyric* is founded on this expectation assured even to joviality; the hymn probably familiar to more English lips than any other in the language—

“ Here we suffer grief and pain,
 Here we meet to part again,
 In heaven we part no more.
 Oh ! that will be joyful,
 Joyful, joyful, joyful !
 Oh ! that will be joyful,
 When we meet to part no more ; ”

not to be recalled by some of us without the echo of various rustic renderings—

“ Teachers, too, shall meet above,
 And the *pastures* whom we love ; ”

and the long-drawn

“ When we meet to part no *moor*. ”

The vast number of this class of hymns may be

attributable to various causes. In the first place, a certain imagery is ready for any versifier. Palms, crowns, a golden city, a river, and a promised land, make up a picture, and it is permitted to all people, from long prescription, to express a hungering for a future without exactly feeling it.

It is observable that, in this department, literary qualifications are at their lowest. We come upon the oddest rhymes—*mansion* and *transient*, *meeter* and *creature*, and so on; but the theme is supposed of itself an inspiration.

No people have much right to talk about heaven who do not at least strive to begin their heaven upon earth. The heaven of the ignorant, on the contrary, is treated as a region so absolutely separate and distinct from earthly tempers and affections, that the fact that a man has spent his whole life with the strongest earthward tendencies does not interfere with the assumption that he will feel himself entirely at home, and in his place, among the blest. But another reason for this fond dwelling on a future heaven is, no doubt, that the poor do not find earth such a comfortable home and resting-place for body or mind as the rich. Well-to-do people, with an easy certain income, and all their comforts about them, would not find their spirits as much refreshed by these Songs of Canaan as the companies for whom they are composed. There will be no *want*, as well as no black bonnets, and no funerals in heaven, says Richard Weaver's prose, and his hymn sings—

"No poverty there—no, the saints are all wealthy,
 The heirs of His glory whose nature is love ;
 No sickness can reach them, that country is healthy ;
 Oh say, will you go to the Eden above ?"

But such detail does not generally enter into the glorious vision, which is all of rest and home in the abstract, with as much iteration as may be, and always a chorus. Many of these Hymns of Canaan are adapted to well-known tunes, and sung by young people in those manufactories where only hymns are allowed to be sung. One of these, cribbed from Montgomery, is most popular, though altered in its later parts in a style excruciating to a sensitive author :—

"For ever with the Lord,
 Amen, so let it be ;
 Life from the dead is in that word :
 'Tis immortality.
 Here in the body pent,
 Absent from Him I roam,
 Yet nightly pitch my moving tent
 A day's march nearer home," &c.

And another—

"There is a better world, they say, Oh, so bright !
 Where sin and woe are done away, Oh, so bright !
 And music fills the balmy air,
 And angels with bright wings are there,
 And harps of gold, and mansions fair, Oh, so bright !" &c.

Another, to the tune, " My Heart's in the Highlands "—

"My rest is in heaven, my rest is not here,
 Then why should I murmur when trials are near ?
 Be hushed, my sad spirit ; the worst that can come
 But shortens the journey and hastens me home.
 For the Lion of Judah shall break every chain,
 And give us the victory again and again," &c.

The Revival hymn-book suggests to young men and women to invite one another to Canaan, which is one way of making services popular:—

Sisters.

“Say, brothers, will you meet us ?
 Say, brothers, will you meet us ?
 Say, brothers, will you meet us,
 On Canaan’s happy shore ?

Brothers.

By the grace of God we’ll meet you !
 By the grace of God we’ll meet you !
 By the grace of God we’ll meet you,
 Where parting is no more !

Chorus.

Glory, glory, hallelujah !
 Glory, glory, hallelujah !
 Glory, glory, hallelujah !
 For ever, evermore !

Sisters.

We, a little band, before Thee,
 Jesus ! Lord of all, adore Thee ;
 Soon we’ll follow Thee to glory,
 On Canaan’s happy shore.

Brothers.

Pilgrims here we are and weary ;
 Dark the road has been, and dreary ;
 Daylight dawns, and brings us near Thee,
 To Canaan’s happy shore.

Sisters.

When we see the river swelling,
 Jesus ! every fear repelling,
 Show us then our father’s dwelling
 On Canaan’s happy shore.

Brothers.

Thou hast passèd on before us ;
 To thine image, Lord, restore us.
 Death shall never triumph o’er us
 On Canaan’s happy shore.

Brothers.

Say, sisters, will you meet us,
On Canaan's happy shore ?

Sisters.

By the grace of God we'll meet you,
Where parting is no more,"
&c. &c.

But, confident as *all hearers* are encouraged to be in their expectations of a blissful future, one great means of influence with preachers of this school is their bold familiarity with hell and all its terrors. Richard Weaver professes a perfect knowledge of the awful region. He boasts of shaking one dying woman "over hell" till, one by one, she dropped the money-bags from beneath her pillow on to the floor. And horrible stories are told of threats and denunciations following upon warnings contemned; to which, as the biographer puts it, "the Almighty Arbiter set His seal." In so far as there is any truth in these stories, we take them as an illustration of a marked difference between the educated and uneducated in the influence of vague alarms upon the nerves. Women who, in the practical work of life, are far bolder and more self-reliant than their high-born sisters, have far less power of standing against mysterious terrors. A violent woman, met on her own ground, her curses answered by a bold threat assuming the tone of prophecy, is not at all an unlikely victim. Awful words, disregarded at the moment, tell when the reaction comes, and the prophecy works its own fulfilment.

Whatever we may think of these specimens of

popular devotion, it is very clear that they have awakened sympathy in unexpected quarters. Two books of Catholic hymns, by the late Father Faber, which bear the token of favour and success that numbers give on their title-pages, seem to us evidently composed on these models. The Father talks, indeed, in his preface, of the Olney hymns having been once dear to him, but one detects a more modern, and we will say less scrupulous, source of inspiration. He evidently is attracted by the tone which we have called irreverent, and imitates it deliberately; both as most removed from the tone of the Church he had abandoned, and as a sort of thing that tells with the vulgar. Taking up this view, he thus reasons himself into irreverence, arguing that real reverence always assumes the disguise of its opposite:—

“The awe that lies too deep for words,
 Too deep for solemn looks—
 It finds no way into the face,
 No spoken vent in books.
 They would not speak in measured tones,
 If awe had in them wrought
 Until their spirits had been hushed
 In reverential thought.
 They would have smiled in playful ways,” &c.

Again—

“The solemn face, the downcast eye,
 The words constrained and cold—
 These are the homage, poor at best,
 Of those outside the fold.
 They know not how our God can play
 The babe’s, the brother’s part ;
 They dream not of the ways He has
 Of getting at the heart.”

Any awe that shows itself in appropriate look and

action is gloom, sourness, and “ungainly stiffness,” and the Puritan element of Protestantism.

Following out this view, we find these stanzas in a hymn entitled “The True Shepherd,” for the use of a ragged school. We recognise the characteristic Revivalist rhymes :—

“ He took me on His shoulder,
And tenderly He kissed me ;
He bade my love be bolder,
And said how He had missed me ;
And I’m sure I heard Him say,
As He went along this way,
O silly souls come near Me ;
My sheep should never fear Me ;
I am the Shepherd true !

Strange gladness seemed to move Him
Whenever I did better ;
And He coaxed me so to love Him
As if He was my debtor ;
As He went along this way, &c.

Let us do, then, dearest brothers,
What will best and longest please us ;
Follow not the ways of others,
But trust ourselves to Jesus ;
We shall ever hear Him say,” &c.

He thus treats of ineffable mysteries :—

“ God’s glory is a wondrous thing,
Most strange in all its ways,
And, of all things on earth, least like
What men agree to praise.
As He can endless glory weave
From time’s misjudging shame,
In this our world He is content
To play a losing game.”

At one time the repetition, which is one character-

istic of Revivalism, is regarded as a sign of love, even when practised to imbecility :—

“ O Jesus, Jesus ! dearest Lord,
 Forgive me if I say
 For very love Thy sacred name
 A thousand times a-day.

The craft of this wise world of ours
 Poor wisdom seems to me ;
 Ah ! dearest Jesus ! I have grown
 Childish with love of Thee !”

Again—

“ O I am burning so with love,
 I fear lest I should make too free.”

There is the same easy explanation of the scheme of redemption, which abounds in our series. The soul is thus addressed :—

“ O wonderful, O passing thought,
 The love that God hath had for thee ;
 Spending on thee no less a sum
 Than the undivided Trinity !
 Father and Son and Holy Ghost
Exhausted for a thing like this.”

If we are to have irreverence, we prefer it of the rude unconscious sort, not put on as something that will answer as a sort of experiment, as thus :—

“ How can they tell how Jesus oft
 His secret thirst will slake,
 On those strange freedoms childlike hearts
 Are taught by God to take ? ”

Vulgarity in rhythm and rhyme are affectedly adapted to his peculiar tenets. This is how boys are taught to address St Philip :—

“ Sweet Saint Philip ! we are weeping
Not for sorrow, but for glee ;
Bless thy converts bravely keeping
To the bargain made with thee.
Help, in Mary ! joy in Jesus,
Sin and self no more shall please us.
We are Philip’s gift to God,” &c. &c.

We have dwelt so long on one part of our subject that the voluble Muse of Teetotalism has little room left for the display of her gifts. And yet nothing more clearly illustrates the different influences at work in the training of the lower and higher classes of society than the numerous collections of temperance and teetotal songs and hymns sold by their thousands, nay hundreds of thousands. We have half-a-dozen by us drawn up for the Band of Hope alone, in which its children are taught it is a paramount duty to instruct and reprove their elders, and to regard as a drunkard in act or in anticipation every person they see drink a glass of beer. *They* are the reformers, *they* are to conquer “ King Alcohol,” and to bring in a reign of liberty and peace. But the fact is, the subject is incurably prosaic. The excuse for this is probably of the nature of the sailor’s contending with his fellow for the palm of verse : one begins—

“ In the Bay of Bengal—I lost my all,”

To which the other appends—

“ In the Bay of Biscay—I lost my stockings.”

“ That’s not poetry,” cries the rhymester. “ Ay, but mine’s true and yours isn’t,” was the rejoinder. A great deal of what the teetotallers say is true, but it isn’t

poetry. Their vocabulary is hopeless. Twist the leading ideas as you may, insinuate them into the middle of a line, or dignify them with an answering rhyme, they defy management. Every person, thing, or part of speech whatever connected with liquor, has the same insolent prominence and knack of overpowering every other noun or verb that keeps it company. The changes are rung upon "temperance" and "teetotal," "strong drink," "wine," "gin," "beer," "public-houses," "landlords," "drunkards," "tipplers" and "sots," "takers of the pledge" and "abstainers," always with the same effect upon the ear; and it must be owned, most of these are awkward terms, not to hint at but to name in full. Our readers must be satisfied with a few specimens, a line culled here and there from this mass of strenuous effort to give vivacity, stimulus, and pathos to the teetotal cause. A hymn is opened with such exordiums as the following:—

" Who, the sacred page perusing,
Precepts, promises, and laws,
Can be guiltless in refusing
To support the temperance cause ? "

or—

" However others choose to act
Towards the temperance cause,
We hail its blessings to our home,
And strictly keep its laws."

One begins to the tune of "Stevens"—

" Six hundred thousand drunkards sink."

One poem lays down the rule—

" All public-houses must be closed,
Abstaining is the plan proposed."

One is figurative—

“The abstinence light is breaking.”

One rhetorical—

“All hail! the temperance cause,
Thousands from drink abstain.”

One in the measure of the National Anthem prays for drunkards—

“May they be brought to hate
Drinks that intoxicate.”

Another asks—

“May drunkards see sobriety
In an alluring light!”

One praises total abstinence—

“Say not that you cannot aid them,
See, here is a certain cure;
Total Abstinence, so easy,
Safe, effectual, and secure;
Come, apply it,
'Tis a safe effectual cure.”

One rejoices that—

“Thousands now intemperance dreading,
Bane of health and joy and peace,
Better principles are spreading;
See how temperance men increase!”

One utters the fervent aspiration—

“Oh! that our females young and fair
Were wise to shun the fatal snare,
Which Satan lays to catch their feet,
And draw them to the drunkard's seat.”

One prophesies—

“That will be a joyful day
When strong drink shall pass away.”

One wishes—

“ I were the monarch, and had supreme command,
 I’d close the beer and gin shop, and make a joyful land,
 The prison would be empty, and better places full,
 And every home a palace beneath the golden rule.
 I’d close the gin-shop, liberty restoring,
 I’d close the gin-shop, and send the drink away ;
 If I made laws I’d never let them sell again,
 I’d close the gin-shop, and send the drink away.”

The youthful abstainer sees his place in history—

“ Heralds of old England’s glory
 Are abstainers young and free !
 Who can tell, in future story,
 How supreme their power shall be ? ”

and foresees the day—

“ Drink shall fall with tyrants all ; ”

and avers—

“ We won’t give up the temperance cause
 Though all the world should rage.”

They are also taught to sing the inevitable consequences of “drinking a little wine”—

“ A little drink seems safe at first,
 Exerting little power,
 But soon begets a raging thirst,
 Which cries for more and more.

The way of ruin thus begins,
 Downwards as easy stairs ;
 If conscience suffers little sins,
 Soon larger ones it bears.”

Landlords are invoked in pathetic strain, recalling a popular song—

“ Landlord, spare that sot ; ”

and Burns’s measure is put to a use he little dreamt of in another—

" Shall e'er cold water be forgot
 When we sit down and dine ? "

As far as we can see, teetotalism has had but one poet, and we miss him here. Under no hands can abstaining from intoxicating liquors have a wholly ideal treatment; but the ideal and the real have at any rate once been brought side by side in the advocacy of this, which is essentially *the cause, the regeneration*, with its champions. The topics and the line of argument of this *chef d'œuvre* are precisely those of the temperance literature before us. Our readers shall judge how far the moderns fall short in airy grace and play of fancy, as well as grasp of their subject, in comparison with the author of the inaugural ode sung at the great cold water celebration held at Boston, U.S., thirty years ago—

ODE.

" In Eden's green retreats
 A water-brook that played
 Between soft mossy seats
 Beneath a plane-tree's shade,
 Whose rustling leaves
 Danced o'er its brink,
 Was Adam's drink
 And also Eve's.

Beside the parent spring
 Of that young brook, the pair
 Their morning chant would sing,
 And Eve, to dress her hair,
 Kneel on the grass
 That fringed its side,
 And make its tide
 Her looking-glass.

And when the man of God
 From Egypt led his flock,
 They thirsted, and his rod
 Smote the Arabian rock,
 And forth a rill
 Of water gushed,
 And on they rushed
 And drank their fill.

Would Eden thus have smiled
 Had *wine* to Eden come ?
 Would Horeb's parched wild
 Have been refreshed with *rum* ?
 And had Eve's hair
 Been dressed in *gin*,
 Would she have been
 Reflected fair ?

Had Moses built a still,
And dealt out to that host
To every man his gill,
And pledged him in a toast,
How large a band
Of Israel's sons
Had laid their bones
On Canaan's land !

Sweet fields beyond death's flood
Stand dressed in living green ;
For, from the throne of God,
To freshen all the scene,
A river rolls,
Where all who will
May come and fill
Their crystal bowls.

If Eden's strength and bloom
Cold water thus hath given,
If e'en beyond the tomb
It is the drink of heaven—
Are not good wells
And crystal springs
The very things
For our hotels ? ”

Seriously speaking, it is difficult to believe that the concluding clencher to the argument could be written in grave earnest by so neat a versifier ; but a study of the dozen temperance hymn-books and melodists before us satisfies us that the thing is possible. Teetotalism is of the nature of a hobby—a state in which the mind is insensible and dead to the absurd.

With regard to the body of verse from which we have selected, it is superfluous to adduce it as testimony to the doctrine that the religion of the multitude is always a vulgar religion. It is like telling the cabman he is no gentleman. And no one can hear the excitement of these wild services parodied by street boys or Hallelujahs hummed by them at their rough play, without a serious alarm for the consequences of making sacred things thus common and profane. But one redeeming point we note in all these collections.

Whatever is distinctive is, indeed, vulgar and boisterous, and, from mere coarseness of perception, if from no worse alloy, irreverent. But mingled with these effusions are uniformly many of the best hymns in our language, and often tender and graceful modern compositions, in startling discrepancy with the prevailing tone. All we can say is, if a penitent prize-fighter or reformed drunkard, in his moments of contrition, can be brought to understand and estimate them at their true worth, a work has been effected which cannot be regarded as other than a good one.

ILLUSTRATION.

PERHAPS there is no intellectual gift that conveys a greater sense of power than that of ready and felicitous illustration, or one that wins its possessor a more undisputed pre-eminence. It is one of those points on which it may be said that all people know themselves, and are forced to acknowledge a superior. A man may talk nonsense and not know it, or write commonplace in full persuasion that he is original, or uphold his fallacies against the conclusions of the ablest logician; but he cannot help knowing when he is no hand at an illustration. There is no room for self-delusion or rivalry. Not only does it not come readily, but he beats his brain for it in vain. It would be a curious inquiry how many men live and die, respected and useful members of society too, without once hitting off a happy simile. We are convinced they would immeasurably outnumber that formidable array of figures telling the difference between the sexes, which causes so much anxiety in the present

day. Of course it is competent to people to say that they do not care for illustration—that it proves nothing—that it is a mere “toy of thought,” interfering with and often perplexing the business of reason and action; but whether we like ourselves as well without this faculty or not, it is impossible not to enjoy its exercise in another. We may treat it as a superfluity; it may lack the solid satisfaction of reason and demonstration, and be only like the nard pistic Jeremy Taylor talks of, the perfume of which “is very delightful when the box is newly broken, but the want of it is no trouble—we are well enough without it;” but the sudden fresh fragrance is not the less delicious while it lasts, and invigorating to the spirits.

We use the word illustration as embracing the widest field, and including the whole figurative machinery of fancy and imagination—metaphor, simile, imagery, figure, comparison, impersonation—in fact, every method of elucidation through their agency. Of course invention may be actively and delightfully employed without any use of this charming gift, and therefore, we should say, without the possession of it; for an apt illustration, an exquisite simile, will out if it flashes into the brain. There is a certain concentration in the matter in hand—the scene, the situation—which stands the writer instead of any other gift, and dispenses with all ornament. This, we should say, is the case with Mr Trollope, whose metaphor, when he uses it, is from the open, acknowledged,

familiar stock of all mankind ; and remarkably with Miss Austen, in whose whole range of writings no original figure occurs to us, unless it be Henry Tilney's ingenious parallel between partners in matrimony and partners in a country-dance. Her experience probably presented her with no example of a ready illustrator, and she painted men and women as she found them, as making failures when they tried ; like Lydia Bennet, who flourished her hand with its wedding-ring, and "smiled like anything" ; or, adding triteness to common dulness, as in Mr Collins, whose letter found favour with Mary ; "the idea of the olive-branch is not wholly new, but I think it is well expressed." When we say that most men are without the gift in question, it is obvious that we mean original illustration. Only a poet could first invest Time with wings ; but we talk of the flight of time now without pretending to any share of his gift. There are certain figures incorporated in the language which we cannot speak without using. We are all poetical by proxy. Such common property is the imagery connected with sunrise and the dawn ; sunset and twilight ; sun, moon, stars, and comets ; lightning and storm ; seas, rivers, frost, and dew ; the road, the path, the ladder ; the rose, the lily, and the violet ; the dying lamp and its extinguisher ; angels, the grave ; the lion, the tiger, the wolf, and the lamb ; the eagle, the dove, and the parrot ; the goose and the monkey. But indeed the list of incorporated metaphor is endless, and it has required a real poet

these several hundred years past to hit off anything new out of the subjects of it. But they are all capable in his hands of a sudden illumination, of figuring in new characters, of imparting the surprise which is the very essence of the illustration proper. And once a surprise is always a surprise—that is, the flash in the poet's mind plays and coruscates round it always. We may weary of the hackneyed use of it; in dull hands it may sound stale; but no taint destroys the first freshness when we come upon it in its right place. There it still delights us to read how

“The weak wanton Cupid
Shall from your neck unloose his amorous fold,
And like a dew-drop from the lion's mane
Be shook to air.”

The grandeur of the comparison when Pandemonium rose like an exhalation, never sinks to commonplace. The suggestions of what is noble, beautiful, and familiar in nature, are really endless, however the soil may seem exhausted to prosaic minds, which are yet quite capable of being refreshed into awakened interest by a new epithet or an original collision of ideas, revealing some undiscovered sympathy with human feeling. Every poet adds something to the common stock of imagery, and so enlarges our perceptions. Shakespeare, on saluting a beautiful woman as Day of the World, quickens our sense of beauty alike in nature and in man. It needed imagination first to affix the idea of

sovereignty to the morning, but it was at once adopted by the general mind—

“Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovran eye.”

Wordsworth first endued it with “innocence,” in which we own an equal fitness—

“The innocent brightness of a new-born day
Is lovely yet.”

Often as the dawn comes round, we do not know that anybody has called it confident before Mr Browning in his ‘Lost Leader’ :—

“Life’s night begins: let him never come back to us,
There would be doubt, hesitation, and pain;
Forced praise on our part, the glimmer of twilights,
Never glad confident morning again.”

Or associated dew with the memory as Mr Tennyson does—

“O strengthen me, enlighten me,
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.”

We have always liked, for its homely freshness, Christopher North’s simile of the dispelling powers of the sun upon the Scotch mist, in which, as a child, he had lost himself,—“Like the sudden opening of shutters in a room, the whole world was filled with light.” And for its energy, the Laureate’s stormy sunset—

“And wildly dash’d on tower and tree,
The sunbeam strikes along the world.”

These images and epithets are all obvious enough as we read them, but in their place we recognise them

as the poet's own coinage. There is no borrowed air about them. Byron tinges opening and closing day with his own spleen and discontent, and makes them sentimental, when he throws upon their shoulders the task of making life just bearable. After a lovely description of sunset, with its transient glories, his own temper speaks in the person of Myrrha in "Sardanapalus,"—

"And yet

It dwells upon the soul, and soothes the soul,
And blends itself into the soul, until
Sunrise and sunset form the haunted epoch
Of sorrow and of love; which they who mark not
Know not the realms where those twin genii
. . . . build the palaces,
Where their fond votaries repose and breathe
Briefly; but in that brief cool calm inhale
Enough of heaven to enable them to bear
The rest of common, heavy, human hours,
And dream them through in placid sufferance."

The fitness of a metaphor to its place may give novelty to the most familiar analogies—

"Put out the light, and then put out the light."

When the Ancient Mariner tells his unwilling hearer, "I pass like night from land to land," he imparts to matter-of-fact minds a newly-conceived mystery of motion to the most familiar of nature's phenomena. Nothing is more common than to liken girlish beauty to the rose; but, nevertheless, George Eliot's picture of Hetty awakes a more lively and amused sense of the fitness of the simile—"If ever a girl was made of roses, it was Hetty that Sunday morning;" and familiar as the type of the road is as

conveying a moral, we find no triteness in Crabbe when, satirising the learning - made - easy of some teachers of his day, he clenches it with—

“ And some to Heaven itself their byway know.”

Nothing is so trite through other men's use that it may not be invested with new qualities, or brightened with renewed glory by the poet; but in speaking of illustration, of course we more particularly mean a fresh coinage altogether—that happy fit and neat adjustment of things not coupled together before, which brings the matter illustrated with sudden force to the reader or hearer. The gift of doing this implies very wide powers, and unremitting industry in the use of them: an activity of observation possessed by very few; a lifelong habit of taking in what passes before eyes and ears and reasoning upon them; an exceptional memory, and method in the training of it. What the illustrator observes he arranges in his mind, storing its treasures on a system which can produce them at the right moment. Most of us have an illustration to the point if we could find it; but our minds, even if they be busy ones, are furnished too much on the plan, or want of plan, of Dominie Sampson's—stowed with goods of every description, like a pawnbroker's shop, but so cumbrously piled together, and in such total disorganisation, that the owner can never lay his hands on any one article at the moment he has occasion for it. This at least may be the case with the conversational blunderers

who lead up to where they expect an apt simile, tumble up and down for it, and do not find it. But a good illustrator has not only his attention alive and awake, and thinks to purpose—he has sympathy with his kind in all those fields of observation from which he derives his fund of illustration. And this is one main bond of union. We recognise a mind interested in what interests ourselves. Nothing is more charming, for instance, than to find a man of genius, whose thoughts and aspirations might all be supposed to circle above the heads of the common work-a-day world, perfectly familiar with the little cares, the homely objects, the minor pleasures, troubles, inconveniences, which beset ordinary humanity, and taking them in precisely the same spirit. In his discourse on fanatical scruples of conscience, it is very agreeable, for instance, to find Jeremy Taylor illustrating a deep question of casuistry by a simile open to the comprehension of every man, woman, and child who has ever worn a shoe. Scruples, he says, are like a stone in the shoe: if you put your foot down it hurts you; if you lift it up you cannot go on. Its aptness, allied to its homeliness, tickles the fancy like wit. No subject can be dull under such handling.

Illustration is an amiable gift—amiable at least to the reader. It seeks constantly to relieve the tedium of attention and fixed thought. It is modest, and labours to save him the irksomeness of elaborate demonstration. It renders things clear and plain, with least trouble to ourselves, and throws in a good thing

into the bargain. Constantly, indeed, it is a necessity. We can know some things only through vivid illustration. How, for instance, can a stay-at-home receive any idea of the Staubbach but through such a picture as Tennyson draws of

“The Alpine ledges, with their wreaths of dangling water-smoke.”

Its serious office is to help along an abstract argument, to lighten and facilitate the discussion of grave topics, to administer a fillip to infirm attention, and arrest a straggling wayward fancy. Illustrations don't prove a point, but they help us to tide over the labour of proof, and sweeten the extreme effort to most men of steady thought. Of all gifts this secures readers for weighty and toilsome questions on morals, politics, and religion; and is the only legitimate method of lightening these, except, indeed, extreme neatness and precision of expression, which can for a time dispense with all ornament or alleviation whatever to the severity of the topic under treatment. Locke, through an illustration, inflicts a sense of shame on the reader who has not thought for himself, which no reproof in sterner shape would impart; and at the same time, by a second metaphor, gives a stimulus to endeavours. In his Preface we read: “He who has raised himself above the *alms-basket*, and, not content to *live lazily on scraps of begged opinion*, sets his own thoughts on work to find and follow truth, will (whatever he lights on) not miss the *hunter's satisfaction*; every moment of his pursuit will reward his pains with some

delight, and he will have reason to think his time not ill spent, even when he cannot boast of any great acquisition."

We have said that the illustrator habitually keeps his attention alive; but this, of course, applies only to a mind of very wide sympathies. Most people are one-eyed; half the world is a blank to them—they do not observe it. It was said of Tasso that he never departed from the woods—that is, all his comparisons were taken from the country. We can imagine him, indeed, as passing over the common life of cities with eyes that saw nothing. Not so with Ariosto; his verse is enlivened, his story illustrated, by a hundred familiar allusions to the manners and habits of his time. One of his heroes, for example, passes from one danger to a worse, or, as it is expressed, out of the frying-pan into the fire. Dante has appropriate illustration for everything alike, when he condescends to use it,—nature in its grandeur and repose, the pulpit, the studio, and the workshop.

In every case, and however it is applied, metaphor may be said to be the natural link between man and the world he lives in; neither can be brought home to the feelings but through the help of the other. When nature is the theme, man's labours, his humours and passions, are necessary to give force to the picture: when man and his works occupy the front, then nature—and in nature we include all that is not man and those works—is instinctively sought into for means towards that comparison and likeness the mind

craves for. We all think mistily in this vein. The poet gives it expression. Thus Wordsworth, in the history of his own mind, portrays the faculty of illustration :—

“ To every natural form, rock, fruit, or flower,
E'en the loose stones that cover the highway,
I gave a moral life ; I saw them feel,
Or linked them to some feeling : . . .
Add that whate'er of Terror or of Love,
Or Beauty, Nature's daily face put on
From transitory passion, unto this
I was as sensitive as waters are
To the sky's influence in a kindred mood
Of passion ; was obedient as a lute
That waits upon the touches of the wind.”

Every object in nature takes a colour in obedience to these varying moods. When apostrophising the daisy, the “wee modest flower,” he finds likenesses for it in things most opposite. It is a nun ; it is a sprightly maiden ; it is

“ A queen in crown of rubies drest,
A starveling in a scanty vest.”

But, Protean as these resemblances may be, nothing in nature can affect the poet but through his sympathy with man. The waning moon allies itself in Bryant's mind with waning intellect.

“ Shine thou for forms that once were bright,
For sages in the mind's eclipse,
For those whose words were spells of might,
But falter now with stammering lips.”

All pity for nature's decay and weakness can only arise through this unconscious comparison with the same in ourselves.

“ Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven,
As falls the plague on men.”

Mrs Browning draws from the familiar object,—a shadow cast on running waters,—a sad but just illustration of faith and constancy misplaced, thus giving the key-note of the poem which it opens:—

“ The lady’s shadow lies
Upon the running river ;
It lieth no less in its quietness
For that which resteth never.
Most like a trusting heart
Upon a passing faith,
Or as upon the course of life
The steadfast doom of death.”

It is not necessary to a poet of genius to have seen either the illustration or the thing illustrated. Milton had neither seen Satan “ rear from off the pool his mighty stature,” nor witnessed anything at all approaching to the convulsion of nature to which he compares the demon standing erect—

“ As when the force
Of subterranean wind transports a hill,
Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
Of thundering Etna, whose combustible
And fuell’d entrails thence conceiving fire,
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
And leave a singèd bottom, all involved
With stench and smoke : such resting found the sole
Of unblest feet.”

Neither had Bacon’s outward ear caught the tones of Greek music when he describes the mythological truths handed down by old traditions as the “ breath and purer spirits of the earliest knowledge, floating down and made musical by Grecian flutes.” But

this method of illustration, without distinct knowledge for eye and sense, needs the rarest gifts. In meaner hands it is the source of most of the dull and trite illustration of which we are so weary; and lies at the root of the prejudice which popularly hangs about simile and metaphor as so much flimsy decoration, so that every sentence that seems to contain them is eluded by the practised eye. In truth we trust a writer when we apply our minds with hope and animation to his imagery. When authors insert metaphor as an *ornament*, which is the way many people view it, it does not deserve to be read. A really happy metaphor is part and parcel of the work, and ought no more to be regarded as a superfluity than a child's golden tresses, on the ground that it can live in health without them. Some authors allow it to transpire that they keep a note-book, in which they enter every happy thought or pretty simile that occurs to their leisure, to be incorporated subsequently into some larger work. These prepared similes are very certain to do him no credit, to be ornaments out of place, and to betray their origin. Either they don't fit at all, or they manifest that universal fitness which constitutes the commonplace—so that we know all about it beforehand—or they are led up to by too transparent artifice, entangling and breaking the author's line of thought. The simile that lives is of the essence of the page where it is enshrined, coeval with the matter it illuminates, or at least flashing upon the author while he still muses upon what he

has written. De Quincey says that Coleridge in his early days used the image of a man "sleeping under a manchineel-tree," alternately with the case of Alexander killing his friend Clitus, as resources for illustration which Providence had bountifully made inexhaustible in their applications. No emergency could possibly arise to puzzle the poet or the orator, but one of these similes (please Heaven !) should be made to meet it. So long as the manchineel continued to blister with poisonous dews those who confided in its shelter, so long as Niebuhr forbore to prove Alexander of Macedon a hoax and Clitus a myth, his fixed determination was that one or other of these images should come upon duty when he found himself on the brink of insolvency. Not so adjustable were the similes that have made his own verses famous; as, for instance, that which pictures the horror which held the Mariner's eyes fixed before him so that he little saw of what had else been seen :—

" Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And, having once turned round, walks on
And turns no more his head ;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread."

This was neither anticipation nor afterthought, but essential part of a whole.

The department of nature that furnishes the commonest illustration, and needs least the gift as a distinction, is that which finds its most appropriate field in the fable. The extraordinary sympathy that

infancy manifests towards all forms of animal life —the passion every baby shows for horse and cow, cat and dog, parrot and canary, so that for their sake it willingly forswears mere intellectual converse —makes us regret the general disuse of fable as moral teaching for children. This generation does not know *Æsop* as its progenitors of all time have known him. But this natural affinity is reason enough for the universal habit of comparison between animals and men; the alliance and resemblance is so obvious, and of so long standing, that everybody is alive to it. Dr Johnson died in this form of metaphor. His friends record his complaints of the man who attended him: "Instead of watching, he sleeps like a dormouse; and when he helps me to bed he is awkward as a turnspit-dog the first time he is put into the wheel." Everybody can call his neighbour an ass, and liken a songstress or a lover to a nightingale—

"Sad Philomel thus—but let similes drop,
And now that I think on't, the story may stop."

The sympathy is so intimate that every passion expresses itself through this vocabulary instinctively—

"What, all my pretty chickens, at one fell swoop!"

When we say that a writer does not use metaphor, we must therefore except this form of it. In glancing over any one of Mr Trollope's novels, 'Dr Thorne,' for instance, we find very lively use of the animal kingdom. His readers must be familiar with his

habit of calling young men, in their capacity of lover, wolves ; and we come upon decoy-ducks, birds of prey, turtle-doves, chattering magpie, leeches, &c., and so on When the Doctor wishes to prepare his niece for the great fortune that has fallen to her, he talks in fable :—

“ ‘I fear, Mary, that when poor people talk disdainfully of money, they often are like your fox, born without a tail. If nature suddenly should give that beast a tail, would he not be prouder of it than all the other foxes in the world ?’

“ ‘Well, I suppose he would. That’s the very meaning of the story. But how moral you’ve become all of a sudden, at twelve o’clock at night ! Instead of being Mrs Radcliffe, I shall think you’re Mr Æsop.’ ”

Mrs Gaskell is seldom tempted to illustration, but this form of it suits the feminine genius. In the ‘Cranford Papers,’ Mr Mulliner, the Hon. Mrs Jamie-
son’s powdered footman, the terror of all the good ladies who could not boast such a distinction, “in his pleasantest and most gracious mood, looked like a sulky cockatoo.” In ordinary minds this modified exercise of the fancy is applied mostly to the purposes of common vituperation or endearment. Bird and beast gain nothing by this association with man. But the poet idealises, his inspiration glorifies them into types of power, dignity, ferocity, whatever their distinctive attributes, as Dante’s “ Sordella ”—

“ Posasi come Leon che posa ; ”

as the wolf swells into demon atrocity in Cowley’s fine simile, occurring in his debate with the fiend, Cromwell’s advocate. Failing in argument, that

“great bird of prey” would have carried the poet off—first to the tower, thence to the court of justice, and from thence you know whither! but for the interposition of an angel. Naturally it irritates the fiend to be balked so unexpectedly, and

“Such rage enflames the wolf’s wild heart and eyes,
(Robbed, as he thinks unjustly, of his prize),
Whom unawares the shepherd spies, and draws
The bleating lamb from out his ravenous jaws.
The shepherd fain himself would he assail,
But fear above his hunger does prevail,
He knows his foe too strong, and must be gone ;
He grins as he looks back, and howls as he goes on.”

Though it must be allowed in this case that Cowley had probably only his inner consciousness to guide him as to the deportment of a wolf under these circumstances.

In another vein Southey uses the polypus as the type of the unintelligible. Having mystified one of his friends by a passage from Swedenborg, he bids him read it again.

“Don’t you understand it? Read it a third time. Try it backwards. See if you can make anything of it diagonally. Turn it upside down. Philosophers have discovered that you may turn a polypus inside out, and it will live just as well one way as the other. It is not to be supposed that nature ever intended any of its creatures to be thus inverted, but so the thing happens.”

The satirist illustrates the qualities and passions of men by beasts, birds, and insects, in the spirit of fable, accepting the popular idea of their properties without troubling himself further. Our readers to whom it is familiar, must excuse our giving the

opening of the “Hind and Panther,” for it is not everybody to whom Dryden’s masterpieces are familiar nowadays.

“A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchanged,
Fed on the lawns, and in the forest ranged ;
Without unspotted, innocent within,
She feared no danger, for she knew no sin.
Yet had she oft been chased with horns and hounds
And Scythian shafts ; and many wingèd wounds
Aimed at her heart ; was often forced to fly,
And doomed to death, though fated not to die.”

Then follow the denominations—the “bloody Bear, an Independent beast ;” “the Socinian Reynard ;” “the Calvinistic Wolf, pricking predestinating ears ;” and last, the creeping things, representing minor sects—for liberty of conscience was not a poet’s theme in those days.

“A slimy-born and sun-begotten tribe,
Who, far from steeples and their sacred sound,
In fields their sullen conventicles found.”

The Panther—the Church of England—is drawn with elaboration, but in disdain of close analogy : her spots were all the poet cared for. The Hind enters into conversation with her—

“Considering her a well-bred civil beast,
And more a gentlewoman than the rest.
After some common talk, what rumours ran,
The lady of the spotted muff began.”

Swift finds the animal and insect kingdom a very convenient medium for his cynicism. “A little wit,” he says, “is valued in a woman, as we are pleased with a few words spoken plainly by a parrot.” His political

opponent is the spider arguing with the bee, swelling himself into the size and posture of a disputant, with a resolution to be heartily scurrilous and angry, to urge his own reasons without the least regard to the answers and objections of his opposite, and fully pre-determined in his own head against all conviction. This system of fable is perfectly different from the use made of the lower creation in modern poetry. It is still used as illustration, but through close observation of the individual. Nature is being studied now for its own sake, not only as it subserves men's uses ; and the poet must share and illustrate the spirit of his age, though sometimes at the risk of seeming to play a game of definitions from a nicety of delineation which exceeds the reader's powers of sympathy. Geraint, in the 'Idylls of the King,' having commanded his wife to put off her fine clothes and don again the "faded silk," scrutinises her with the air of a robin—

“ Never man rejoiced
More than Geraint to greet her thus attired ;
And glancing all at once as keenly at her
As careful robins eye the delver's toil,
Made her cheek burn, and either eyelid fall,
But rested with her sweet face satisfied.”

This same Enid, when helpless in Earl Doorm's hands, sent forth

“ A sudden sharp and bitter cry,
As of a wild thing taken in a trap,
Which sees the trapper coming through the wood.”

This cry the poet must have heard, as he had seen the fluster inside a dovecot of

"A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk,
When some one batters at the dovecot doors ; "

and watched the manners of the pet parrot, which turns

"Up through gilt wires a crafty loving eye,
And takes a lady's finger with all care,
And bites it for true love, and not for harm."

There is a simile *imagined* in the modern spirit of careful truth to nature in Mr Browning's "Balaustion's Adventures." An eagle in a very unusual predicament, who personates Death, is faced at a great disadvantage by the lion Apollo. The reader will probably have to read it twice over to embrace the situation, but it will be found a vigorous image when once mastered :—

"And we observed another Deity
Half in, half out the portal—watch and ward—
Eyeing his fellow : formidably fixed,
Yet faltering too at who affronted him,
As somehow disadvantaged, should they strive.
Like some dread heapy blackness, ruffled wing,
Convulsed and cowering head that is all eye,
Which proves a ruined eagle who, too blind,
Swooping in quest of quarry, fawn or kid,
Described deep down the chasm 'twixt rock and rock,
Has wedged and mortised into either wall
O' the mountain, the pent earthquake of his power ;
So lies, half hurtless yet still terrible,
Just when who stalks up, who stands front to front,
But the great lion-guarder of the gorge,
Lord of the ground, a stationed glory there !
Yet he too pauses ere he try the worst
O' the frightful unfamiliar nature, new
To the chasm indeed, but elsewhere known enough,
Among the shadows and the silences
Above i' the sky."

There is a class of metaphor bringing home to us a

sense of the awful, mysterious, and unknown, through what is itself vague shadow, only half apprehended, that gives evidence of a lofty imagination beyond any other form of this gift. To illustrate what we mean, we must again quote what is familiar, Milton's image of Death :—

“The other shape,
If shape it could be called that shape had none,
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb ;
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
For each seemed either ; *black it stood as night,*
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
And shook a dreadful dart.”

Or again—

“Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar
Stood ruled—stood vast infinitude *confined*,
Till at his second bidding darkness *fled*.”

Or—

“And on his crest sat horror plumed.”

Such suggestion is involved in the “secrets of the prison-house.” And we find the same awe veiling itself in impersonation where the prophet Ezekiel warns his people that the day of trouble is close upon them, that his prophecy was not of a distant future, but of terrors close at hand :—

“An end is come, the end is come ; it *watcheth for thee* ; behold it is come ;”

—the end ready to spring, like a thing alive, and inevitable doom craving to destroy and exterminate.

“Woe,” cries Bunyan, in his despair—“woe be to him against whom the Scriptures bend themselves.”

Something of the same feeling attends the shadow

in ‘In Memoriam’—“the shadow feared by man,” that

“Bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, though I walk in haste,
And think that somewhere in the waste,
The *shadow* sits that waits for me.”

And where the fears of conscience in Guinevere are brought before us through the vague fears of superstition :—

“A vague spiritual fear
Like to some *doubtful* noise of creaking doors,
Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,
That keeps the rust of murder on the walls,
Held her awake.”

Three qualities are essential to a perfect illustration. It must be apt, it must be original, and it must be characteristic of its author. So far we have treated illustration mainly in its poetical aspect; as the world reads and enjoys it oftenest and most familiarly, it is wit. An apt illustration taken from the life we live in is wit, however grave the matter it illustrates, and sombre the surroundings. Our old divines allowed themselves these relaxations much more freely than is the habit now, and in so doing imprinted themselves more vividly on their works. The preacher of our day keeps his good stories for his friends at his own fireside. There was nothing within the bounds of modest decorous mirth that Jeremy Taylor or Fuller thought unfit to brighten a grave discourse or a weighty subject.

“There is a disease of infants,” says Fuller, “called the rickets. Have not many nowadays the same sickness in their souls? their

heads swelling to a vast proportion, and they wonderfully enabled with knowledge to discourse. But, alas ! how little their legs, poor their practice, and lazy their walking in a godly conversation !”

There is, again, his quaint impersonation of second childhood. “The Pyramids, doting with age, have forgotten the names of their founders.” And negroes, with him, are “images of God cut in ebony.” Jeremy Taylor abounds in illustration sure to excite a smile, whatever the context ; as where he defines the weak reasoner :—

“He that proves a certain truth from an uncertain argument, is like him that wears a wooden leg when he has two sound ones already.”

Those who postpone the day of repentance are like

“The Circassian gentlemen who enter not into a church till they are sixty and past rapine, but hear service out of window.”

On niceties of religious differences he argues :—

“He that describes a man can tell you the colour of his hair, his stature, and proportion, and describe some general lines enough to distinguish him from a *Cyclop* or a *Saracen*; but when you chance to see the man you will discover figures or little features of which the description had produced in you no fantasm or expectation. And on the exterior signification of a sect, there are more resemblances than in men’s faces, and greater uncertainty in the signs.”

The casualties to which human life is incident are shown by examples :—

“And those creatures which nature hath left without weapons, yet are they armed sufficiently to vex those parts of a man which are left obnoxious, to a sunbeam, to the roughness of a sour grape, to the unevenness of a gravel-stone, to the dust of a wheel, or the unwholesome breath of a star looking awry upon a sinner.”

Of those whom the practice of fasting makes peevish and difficult to live with ("as was sadly experimented in St Jerome"), he says:—

"It is not generally known whether the beast that is wanton or the beast that is cursed be aptest to gore."

That fearlessness characteristic of the born illustrator is especially shown in his triads of examples. He leads up to them without knowing exactly what will come, making sure that fancy will not leave him in the lurch, and when he looked for one, three crowd upon him. A wise person, he argues, will put most on the greatest interest:—

"No man will hire a general to cut wood, or shake hay with a sceptre, or spend his soul and all his faculties upon the purchase of a cockle-shell."

"To resolve is to purpose to do what we may if we will. Some way or other the thing is in our power; either we are able of ourselves, or we are helped. No man resolves to carry an elephant, to be as wise as Solomon, or to destroy a vast army with his own hand."

Again, the humour often lies in a word of metaphor, as where the disconsolate husband, when his grief *has boiled down* somewhat, turns his thoughts to a second marriage.

South talks of men made atheists by a bad conscience, who dare not look truth in the face, and "had rather be befooled into a prudent, favourable, and propitious lie—a lie which shall chuck them under the chin and kiss them, and, at the same time, strike them under the fifth rib;" and of the cheating tradesman selling his soul "like brown paper into the bargain."

Hammond, in a grave discourse, likens the self-delusion of professors to the practice of some Mohammedans, who, when they would get drunk, get rid of conscience by exorcising their soul into some extremity of the body, thus relieving the mass of its responsibility. We do not gather, however, that illustration was ever thought essential to be cultivated where it did not naturally grow. Barrow, who exhausted every subject he took up, never illustrated it beyond the most matter-of-fact examples.

Dryden's was the fancy that most teemed with illustration of the witty as well as poetical sort. His prose is enlivened with it almost to excess. He plunges into it, after the manner of a clever 'Times' article, on the opening of a dedication or preface, all his observations on life, society—or the court, ready at his pen's end.

"It is with the poet as with a man who designs to build, and is very exact, as he supposes, in casting up the cost beforehand; but, generally speaking, he is mistaken in his account, and reckons short in the expense he first intended. He alters his mind as the work proceeds, and will have this or that convenience made, of which he had not thought when he began. So it has happened to me: I have built a house where I intended but a lodge; yet with better success than a certain nobleman, who, beginning with a dog-kennel, never lived to finish the palace he had contrived."

And he apologises in the same vein for the poems thus prefaced:—

"I will hope the best, that they will not be condemned; but if they should, I have the excuse of an old gentleman, who, mounting on horseback before some ladies, when I was present,

got up somewhat heavily ; but desired of the fair spectators that they would count fourscore and eight before they judged him. By the mercy of God I am already come within twenty years of his number, a cripple in my limbs ; but what decays are in my mind the reader must determine.”

He values himself on the fineness of his satire in a comparison we have seen quoted. There is, he says,

“ A vast difference betwixt the slovenly butchering of a man, and the fineness of a stroke that separates the head from the body, and leaves it standing in its place. ‘A man may be capable,’ as Jack Ketch’s wife said of his servant, ‘of a plain piece of work, a bare hanging ; but to make a malefactor die sweetly was belonging only to her husband.’ ”

Theocritus’s Doric, he says, has an incomparable sweetness in its clownishness, “ like a fair shepherdess in her country russet talking in a Yorkshire tone.” Inferior critics are “ French Huguenots, and Dutch boors brought over, but not naturalised, who have not lands of two pounds per annum in Parnassus, and therefore are not privileged to poll.” The age boasted itself a witty one, and false and true wit alike must wear the fashion of their day. The Drama overflowed with it. Thus Witwould, in Congreve’s comedy, never opens his mouth without a trope. He rushes upon the stage :—

“ That’s hard, very hard—a messenger ! a mule, a beast of burden ! He has brought me a letter from the fool my brother, as heavy as a panegyric in a funeral sermon, or a copy of commendatory verses from one poet to another ; and, what’s worse, ’tis as sure a forerunner of the author as an epistle dedicatory.”

He overwhelms Millamant, whom he attends, with similes. Her entrance, indeed, is in a sort of firework

of metaphor. Her irritated lover, expecting her to be followed by the usual troop of admirers, begins :—

“ *Mirabel*.—Here she comes, i’ faith, full sail, with her fall spread and streamers out, and a shoal of fools for tenders.—Ha ! no, I cry her mercy. You seem to be unattended, Madam ; you used to have the *beau monde* throng after you, and a flock of gay fine perukes hovering round you.

“ *Witwould*.—Like moths about a candle. I had like to have lost my comparison for want of breath.

“ *Millamant*.—I have denied myself air to-day. I have walked as fast through the crowd——

“ *Witwould*.—As a favourite just disgraced, and with as few followers.

“ *Millamant*.—Dear Mr Witwould, truce with your similitudes, for I am as sick of ‘em——

“ *Witwould*.—As a physician of a good air. I cannot help it, Madam, though ‘tis against myself.

“ *Millamant*.—Yet again ! Mincing, stand between me and his wit.

“ *Witwould*.—Do, Mrs Mincing, like a screen before a great fire. I confess I do blaze to-day ; I am too bright.”

It is not only the avowed wit who overpowers us with metaphor ; the dramatist strives to show his own invention through the medium of the whole *dramatis personæ*. Everybody has an image or a figure to clinch his meaning ; it is one main cause of the absolute difference between talk on the stage and off it. Not that author or spectator quite knows this, for the humour for illustration is sometimes irrepressible—a sort of fever on the author’s side : and it is one of the chief merits and charms of a good play that it communicates to the listener an inner sense and share of its own cleverness ; it being the great

function of illustration to enlarge the common stock of human intellect, wit, and poetry.

But we must not linger among the writers of a past age. Every memory will recall examples which they prefer to our own. Shakespeare is too familiar a friend to borrow much from. Ben Jonson's exquisite cluster of similes in "The Triumph of Charis" need not be quoted; nor yet Pope's equally delightful tumult of comparisons, which fail to express Belinda's despair. Indeed, all Pope's best illustrations are wit of the first water, and as such proverbial. "Lord Landesborough," "The tall Bully," and a hundred other cues, need only be given to bring the neatest of couplets crowded with meaning to the reader's memory, such as—

"Who can escape Time's all-destroying hand ?
Where's Troy, and where's the May-pole in the Strand ?"

Every age has its peculiar line; and every writer of genius uses similitudes after a manner of his own, whether nature is treated merely as a picture, or invested with a human heart and temper, or deserted altogether for social comparisons found in man and his works. In this last, a favourite method is the allegory or apostrophe, or more familiar anecdote—that case in point with which some minds are so wonderfully stored, that it suggests the idea of invention. This, in clever hands, is the engine or weapon of malice, of all degrees, from the playful to the venomous. A subject thus introduced has no chance—it takes

any colour the author pleases. But its influence is subtler when applied to nullify what has gone before, and to attach a sly sting at the tail of commendation. We observe, for instance, that De Quincey can never enlarge either on the life or poetry of Wordsworth, without a touch of spleen or bile following close on the approval of his taste and intellect. He uses forcible words of esteem for his person, and reverence for his genius; but then comes a little story or apologue, just the slightest infusion of bitter that leaves a lasting taste behind. Nobody else can say a word, but he is down upon the critic for stupidly mistaking the poet's crowning excellence for defect; but when he takes him in hand he is presently reminded of some anecdote which the poet would not thank him for remembering at that moment. Thus the story of Margaret in the 'Excursion,' on which so much pathos and pity is lavished, suggests a tale in direct ridicule and disparagement of both, as merely abstract and sentimental.

"There is a story somewhere told of a man who complained, and his friends also complained, that his face looked almost always dirty. The man explained this strange affection out of a mysterious idiosyncrasy in the face itself, upon which the atmosphere so acted as to force out stains and masses of gloomy suffusion, just as it does upon some qualities of stone in rainy or vapoury weather. 'But,' said his friend, 'had you no advice for this strange affection?'—'Oh yes: surgeons had prescribed; chemistry had exhausted its secrets upon the case; magnetism had done its best; electricity had done its worst.' His friend mused for some time, and then asked, 'Pray, amongst these painful experiments, did it ever happen to you to try one that I have read of—namely, a basin of soap and water?' And perhaps on

the same principle it might be allowable to ask the philosophic wanderer who washes the case of Margaret with so many coats of metaphysical varnish, but ends with finding all unavailing, ‘Pray, amongst your other experiments, did you ever try the effect of a guinea?’”

Sydney Smith’s wit goes out very much in illustration, which is indeed the case with all wit; but his *forte* is putting an imaginary case and crowding it with vivid and appropriate detail. His arguments for Roman Catholic emancipation are all enriched with the choicest pictures in this vein of begging the question, as when our constitution is compared to a frigate going into action, in which the captain (whose name was Perceval), “instead of talking to his sailors of king, country, glory, and sweethearts, gin, French prisons, and wooden shoes, claps twenty or thirty of his prime sailors, who happen to be Catholics, into irons, and reminds the crew generally, in a bitter harangue, that they are of different religions; exhorts the Episcopal gunner not to trust the Presbyterian quartermaster; rushes through blood and brains, examining his men in the Catechism and Thirty-nine Articles,” and so on. In his case this mode of proof is peculiarly effective, because, as he did not the least understand the grounds on which his opponents acted, we need not think him deliberately unfair. Nothing could be stronger than his faith in his own views, unless it was his contempt for those of the other side. He had a profound contempt for what he thought non-essentials in religion. To see people differ, and

quarrel, and legislate about and against them, was to him simply ridiculous ; so his illustration expressed exactly the ground and bottom of the matter, and was exhaustive to his own mind.

“I have often thought, if the *wisdom of our ancestors* had excluded all persons with red hair from the House of Commons, of the throes and convulsions it would occasion to restore them to their natural rights. What mobs and riots it would produce ! To what infinite abuse and obloquy would the capillary patriots be exposed ! what wormwood would distil from Mr Perceval ! what froth would drop from Mr Canning ! how (I will not say *my* but *our* Lord Hawkesbury, for he belongs to us all)—how our Lord Hawkesbury would work away about the hair of King William, and Lord Somers, and the authors of the great and glorious Revolution ! how Lord Eldon would appeal to the Deity and to the hair of his children ! Some would say that red-haired men were superstitious ; some would prove they were atheists. They would be petitioned against as the friends of slavery and the advocates of revolt. In short, such a corruption of the heart and the understanding is the spirit of persecution, that these unfortunate people, if they did not emigrate to countries where hair of another colour was persecuted, would be driven to the falsehood of perukes, or the hypocrisy of the Tricosian fluid.”

Minds of this lively order cannot argue without illustration. They rush to it as rest from the pains of disquisition, as well as in confidence thus to win over the suffrages they are anxious for.

The gift of imagination wreathes every abstract speculation, as well as all personal experience, bitter as well as sweet, with these graces, which, when they come unsought, are associated with the subject-matter indissolubly. Every reader of ‘Jane Eyre’ remembers the simile of the snow in June as part of the blank despair where the marriage is broken off. It belongs

to some natures to pause, even in a crisis, in search of that sympathy from nature their reserve forbids them to look for in man, though more commonly illustration is the amusement of the mind in greater leisure and composure of spirit. The illustration in George Eliot's writings that stands foremost in the memory is of this sort. The habit in some minds exercises itself mainly on itself. There are states of the mind that can only be cleared to itself through metaphor; so Haydon exhausts himself in simile to describe the hurry of his own genius—"Invention presses upon a man like a nightmare." "All of a sudden a flash comes inside your head as if a powder-mill had exploded without any noise." The pedlar in the 'Mill on the Floss' describes his head as "all alive inside like old cheese." And Charles Lamb is happy in the vein of his peculiarities, his likes and dislikes. "There is an order of imperfect intellects," he says, "(under which mine must be content to rank), who, amongst other things, seldom wait to mature a proposition, but e'en bring it to market in the green ear." His whole paper on Imperfect Sympathies, which is a personal one, is alive with metaphor. Thus, of the Scotchman he is pleased to say that "he stops a metaphor like a suspected person in an enemy's country. His mind is put together on the principles of *clock-work*." Jews he likes as a *piece of stubborn antiquity*; but in their dress of modern Liberalism "they are neither fish nor flesh." In the negro countenance he acknowledges traits of benignity. "I have yearnings of tenderness towards their faces,

or rather *masks* ;” though “he would not wish to associate or share his meals and good nights with them because they are *black*.” He would starve at the primitive banquet of Quaker life and converse. “My appetites are too high for their *salads*.”

The practised hand shows its skill sometimes in a sort of *tour de force*, throwing a shower of graceful imagery over common things and matters of the house. How pleasantly Lord Lytton glorifies sixpence in the Caxtons!—

“Now, my mother, true woman as she was, had a womanly love of show in her quiet way—of making a genteel figure in the neighbourhood—of seeing that sixpence not only went as far as sixpence ought to go, but that in the going it should emit a mild but imposing splendour—not, indeed, a gaudy flash, a startling Borealian coruscation—which is scarcely within the modest and placid idiosyncrasies of sixpence ; but a gleam of gentle and benign light, just to show where a sixpence had been, and allow you time to say, ‘Behold !’ before

‘The jaws of darkness did devour it up.’ ”

It is the gentle feminineness of Mrs Caxton that tinctures this passage with its poetry, in spite of the banter; and places it in amusing contrast with a certain class of metaphor dealing with lucre, to be found in the mercantile columns of the press. For trade, like other things, instinctively, though in lubberly fashion, falls into simile, and appeals to nature for analogies. “Sir,” writes a correspondent, dating from Mark Lane, “the events of the last five weeks have but rippled the surface of the grain trade, which has flowed in the direction I ventured to anticipate.”

"Since the days of drainage dawned," writes another. While we read of the hog *crop*, and of hogs commanding a high price, and so on. It requires, indeed, a certain delicacy of perception, denied to some, to distinguish the appropriate field for metaphor. A biographer who opens his subject thus: "Born in the cradle of the wholesale book trade," certainly misses it; so does the writer of a dictionary who pronounces truth to be the soul of his work, and brevity its body; and so does the poet who warns against discontent through the medium of fable.

"As well the newt might make complaint,
Because a nightingale it aint."

Nor is it only nameless poets who have evinced a deadness of perception in this matter. The warmest admirers of the Botanic Garden were obliged to own that Dr Darwin carried the Prosopopœia—the illustration of qualities by a bodily presentment of them—too far. In fact this figure will not bear detail. It should be touch and go. Lady Macbeth uses it thus airily when she gives the sentiment—

"Let good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both."

He would have enlarged on digestive processes till the hardest stomach grew qualmish, in the spirit in which he laboriously trifles with chemical affinities, making Azotic Gas the lover of the virgin Air, and transforming Fire into a jealous rival indignant at the treacherous courtship. Again, where the mechanism of that

familiar object, the pump, is illustrated by a picture of matronly beauty administering sustenance to her infant; the pump thus furnishing matter for reproof to the fashionable world, in which affluent mothers are seduced by indolence or dissipation into unnatural contempt for this "delightful duty." These instances fail through the endeavour to raise the familiar and prosaic by supplying them with artificial wings. On the other hand, metaphor and illustration are constantly used to lower and familiarise the dignified or mysterious, as where Thackeray's simple heroine is left to the care of guardian angels with or *without* wages, and Dryden indicates Dido as the coming dowager.

When it is said that most men are without the gift and habit of illustration, it must be owned that this rather applies to the respectable members of the community than to its outlaws and black sheep. A society that has forty phrases to express drunkenness, as those say who have counted them, must be credited with some play of fancy. All callings that find plain speaking inconvenient, invent a dialect of metaphor and allusion, and acquire facility in the use of imagery. "Come along," cried a drunken convict cook, squaring at her master, who invaded the kitchen to know why breakfast did not appear—"Come along, my hearty! Them as wants their breakfast must fight for it, *like the dogs do*." And burlesque, which is the passion of the vulgar, ministers to this taste, both in language and impersonation.

Impersonation is also a method for the exercise of

the illustrating faculty in society of another order altogether. The poor Empress's fancy-dress balls, which amazed Paris and the world some years back, exhausted the invention of belles and beaux. One lady personated a violet, another a snowstorm, others butterflies and other insects, another a pack of cards. To act out the qualities of all these objects must necessarily be the aim of a clever impersonator. Hard though the task, 'Punch's' parody represented it as possible even in the case of purer abstractions. "The Honourable Miss Top Sawyer wonderfully represented To Brighton and back for half-a-crown." "The Duchess of Herne Bay was elegantly robed as the St Martin's baths and wash-houses." And the masterpiece of the evening was "Alderman Sir R. Gobble, as the General Omnibus Company (Limited)."

From all accounts the Americans beat us hollow in illustration. No provincial paper but has a corner of witticisms mainly contributed by them. Sam Slick absolutely bristles with imagery. Every man far west is a Sam Weller. The commonest incidents of life are portrayed, the most ordinary questions are answered, in metaphor. The lecturer is assured that an audience will come with a rush "like a shower of little apples." An imposture is "a steamboat"; to be overreached is to have your "eye-teeth drawn"; to drink is to "conceal too much whisky about the person." Small means and modest pretensions are represented by "one horse," a "one-horse show," a "one-horse reputation"; swamps give a "fine crop of chills and fevers";

coffins are “wooden overcoats.” Something of the same tone characterises American authors when they leave the woods, plains, and streams for their inspiration, and revive the grotesque and wild images derived from the ferocities of savage life, or the conflicts of the first settlers with nature and the wild man. Theodore Parker, the transcendentalist, had a habit of collecting every fact to the disadvantage of the public men he did not like, with the design some day to attack and expose them. These damaging charges were called by his friends his *scalps*. It was complacently said of him, “He keeps all his scalps in the desk of the music hall. While you are listening to him, he suddenly draws one forth, shakes it at the audience, and puts it up again. It was the scalp of a clergyman. You recollect the sin for which he was slain, and grimly recognise and approve.” It was a boast that this leader of thought was healthily built. “There was no room in Parker’s head for vermin—not a single rat-hole in the whole house.” In their scorn for the past these zealots invent a transatlantic Billingsgate of foul similes. The Catechism, for example, is a bundle of old rags. With this is mingled a curious jargon of scientific analogies. Venerable creeds are fossilisations; to rest on one belief or opinion is crystallisation.

In Francisco and the gold-digging districts, cards seem to supply the language of metaphor. We must understand the games of Euchre and Poker to follow their meaning. To become euchred, we are told, is to

lose two points, and the right bower is the knave of trumps. So in the dialogues commemorated by Bret Harte. "What have you got there?" asks the pursued highwayman of King Lynch; who replies, "Two bowers and an ace," showing two revolvers and a bowie-knife. "That takes me," returned Tennessee, and submitted to his fate.

There are some objects in nature and art whose one use and purpose in life seems to be as illustrations. We acknowledge to finding no other utility in the thorn that is inseparable from the rose; nor in Prince Rupert's drop; nor in apples of Sodom, if there are such things; nor in house-spiders; nor in the stray atoms that float on the stream or lie in our path, to be swept into space after they have met the all-embracing eye of poet or moralist. We can do very well without them; but Dryden wanted a comparison for the labours of petty critics who find faults and cannot see beauties, and nothing else would have done as well.

"Errors like straws upon the surface flow,
He who would search for pearls must dive below."

So did Swift illustrate the hypochondriacal fancies of discontent. "Small causes are sufficient to make a man uneasy when great ones are not in the way. For want of a block he will stumble at a straw."

Our aim has been to show and touch upon illustration in its many forms as the enlarger of the human mind. The memory of every reader will supply a rush of further, and, it may be thought, more appropriate and

better-chosen examples. Those who treat it mainly as an ornament, altogether miss its functions and purposes. Metaphor is the educator of the imagination ; perpetually building what is new upon the old, and compelling men into a wider apprehension :—to see through the mind as well as through the eye. What would our ordinary talk have been but for the wits and the poets of all time, who have hung round every common sight, and sound, and need of homely nature with analogies : so forcing upon us the recognition, it may be the contemplation, of higher things ?

LA BRUYÈRE.

WHEN Pascal said that the best books are those which each reader thinks he could have written himself, he must have restricted his meaning to those books which are spun out of the writer's innermost cogitations on what he sees—books of observation and reflection on the life, manners, movement, and thought around him. No reader thinks he could have written a history or a scientific work without previous training. It is books which make man their study,—man, his character, motives, his general portraiture,—which under certain points of excellence seem easy writing; for the subject lies open to us all. Nothing, as our authority says, is more common than *les bonnes choses* (things worth noting and saying). They are all within our reach, and even known to everybody. People strain after excellence; expect to find it in things strange and extraordinary. They should rather stoop and look close. It is near at hand. The only question is how to distinguish it; and this is precisely what ordinary

people do not miss in themselves—a keen discernment; an eye to see what lies before them. When a thing is said to them or read by them which they have had equal opportunities of finding out, they suppose it a mere accident that they never thought it before; or perhaps they do not recognise it to be new as well as true. And yet what excellence is more distinctive and incommunicable than insight, the quality constituting the worth and charm of the author now lying before us, who himself has written, “*After* the spirit of insight and discernment, the rarest things in this world are diamonds and pearls,” and has warned people especially against acting on the impression that to write of what passes under their eyes is easy; counselling them, if they condescend to be imitators at all, to take any style and subject for their model rather than the writers who spin out of themselves, *tirent de leurs entrailles*, all that they express upon paper? The warning is needed, for there is this especial temptation to imitate them, that it is on the trite and threadbare (under common hands) that these writers *qui écrivent par humeur, que le cœur fait parler*, leave their mark—as, for instance, these two Frenchmen. The sombre genius of Pascal added a new sadness to death in the reflection, *Je mourrai seul*. The social spirit of La Bruyère derives comfort from death’s universality. We are all in the same boat. It might have been worse. “If of all men some died and others not, to die would then be a desolating affliction.” Both are

alike removed from the conventional, Justice-Shallow recognition of a fact they cannot grasp. "Certain, 'tis certain, very sure, very sure, death, as the Psalmist saith, is certain to all. All shall die. How a good yoke of oxen at Stamford fair."

It is, in truth, the characteristic of all good books of this class, and that in a special sense, that nobody could have written them but their authors. Wher- ever we find them they are models and masterpieces of style. This, indeed, is an essential of their exist- ence. Good writing is exact writing. It is deline- ation and thought sensitively true in touch and out- line ; and to express a man's own conceptions, he has in a certain sense to invent his own medium. Every good style is instinct with a double truth—the thing drawn and the artist who draws it. He does not—that is, he ought not—to aim at anything but the rendering of his subject ; but he can only do this in his own way. His truth becomes a truism in another's wording ; his discoveries vanish unless he himself de- clares them. For, old as is the study of humanity, nothing is tolerable that can be written about it unless it has flashed on some mind as a new thought, and been delivered with that close, careful rendering which makes style and thought inseparable and almost convertible terms. "Horace or Despreaux have said it before you," was the criticism La Bruyère had to combat. It was through his style that he justified himself. "I believe it on your word," is his answer ; "but I have said it (*comme mien*) in my way. May

not I think true thoughts after them as others will think them after me?" It is not so much the thought he values himself upon as its clear expression, the art concealing art, the labour of composition. "What art is needed to be natural (*rentrer dans la nature*)! What time, what rules, what attention, what labour to dance with the liberty and grace with which we walk, to sing as easily as we talk, to *speak and express one's self* as one thinks!" And it is on this art, this perfection of style, that his fame now mainly rests with his countrymen. Foreigners must study him chiefly for the truth, vivacity, and variety of his observations, and the caustic humour of his characters; but M. Charles Asselineau, the editor of the present new and handsome edition¹ (itself a testimony in these troubled times for France), gives, in his introduction, the successive stages, the three points of view, which three centuries have taken of his great work. "By his contemporaries, at the time of his election into the Academy, 1693, he was viewed mainly as a satirist. The following age regarded him as a moralist: it was as a moralist that he interested and occupied men's thoughts. And this preoccupation lasted into the early years of this present century. In our own time men regard him as a writer, and more than a writer, as an artist."

There are reasons in these days why we should all turn to these classical writers with a particular inclination and interest, from the importance they attributed

¹ 1872.

to diction, and the sense of duty they attached to it. A thing was not said at all until it was put in a well-fitting and graceful garb. They felt obscurity which any pains of theirs could obviate—an obscurity not in the nature of the subject—as a crime and disgrace. They would not desist or think their work complete till it had received the last touch. Writing needed as much training as a delicate handicraft. “It is as much a trade—a *métier*—to write a book as to make a watch.” The one exacts as fine finish as the other. They were pioneers to their readers, the mountains and rough places were to be made smooth for them; the desert of arid discussion must blossom as the rose before they would invite them to walk in it. Mr Browning’s argument in favour of burrs of expression—that they stick—had not yet crossed the brain of writer or reader. Thought was not thought in the rough. *Tout est dit*, all has been said already, are La Bruyère’s opening words. It was only through the medium of a transparent style that he ventured to add his gleanings to the rich harvest of past thought. As his sentences arranged themselves, he felt they were worth something.

Perhaps all this bears on the fact that he wrote in the period when readers represented society, and society represented, to the literary mind, mankind. A fine style was part of good manners. A man writes to be read by somebody. A writer of that day knew to a nicety who would be his readers. They were represented by the friends or small gathering assembled

to hear him read his own performance. We can scarcely estimate the effect that this ceremony of reading his own works to an assemblage of critics would have on an author's system of composition; but we are very sure that it would make him mind his *p*'s and *q*'s. Some it would tempt to affectation, some to epigrammatic terseness. No one could wholly forget the manner in the matter, nobody would dare to be diffuse from mere hurry and precipitation with such an ordeal in immediate view. Where there was stamina and well-founded self-reliance, we can believe the result to be a fineness and grace, a felicity of adaptation of words to thought (*tant de sens dans une phrase, tant d'idées dans un mot*), such as we find in these pages. But, hard as La Bruyère laboured after perfection of style and the character of artist, we yet give him such credit for honesty in the profession of higher aims, as to believe that the title of moralist would have answered best to his own designs, as well as pleased him best; but a moralist careful to utter no platitudes and few hard sayings, almost too hopeless of mending men to be indignant at their errors and vices. "Why should we be angry," he asks, "on seeing their hardness, their ingratitude, their injustice, their pride, their self-love, their forgetfulness of others? They are made so; it is their nature. We might as well be angry on seeing the stone fall or the flame rise." "Men are not light and changeable in great matters. They do indeed change their dress, their language, their manners — sometimes their taste

changes ; but they keep their vices, still constant in wrong and in their indifference to virtue." But men being such as they are, he knew himself to be one of them ; there is the keenest sense of brotherhood. It is not what *they* do, but what *we* do. The follies, weaknesses, vanities of men, he read through his own sympathy in them. Nor could he imagine a keener interest, a worthier labour, a more lasting diversion, than men such as he saw them supplied to him. If men are to be mended, it must be by showing them what they are. His book was a mirror. He formed no system, founded no school. It is all very well to *be* a philosopher, but he objected to be called one. He recognised his subject and his genius, and left the issue to work itself out.

Not much is known of La Bruyère as a man, but what is known adds an interest to his work. He had his singularities and eccentricities. He was honest and disinterested ; his friends esteemed him. Nobody had any harm to say of him beyond the discrepancies of an awkward brusque manner, with the exquisite finish of his style. He is supposed never to have married ; nor can any amount of research trace to him any less creditable connection. He lived in the house of the great Condé as preceptor of his grandson the Duc de Bourbon. Here the court and the great world were open to his observation ; he knew everybody worth knowing. The editor draws a comparison between him and St Simon, both engaged in the same task, at the same moment, of painting their own age—

the one in what he calls his shop (*boutique*) at Versailles, La Bruyère in l'Hotel de Condé: St Simon more occupied with the acts of men than their characters, his object the machine of state rather than the men engaged in working it; La Bruyère interesting himself less with the machine than the workmen. St Simon, the survivor, wrote of him warmly: "The public soon after" (La Bruyère died 1696) "lost a man illustrious for his genius, for his style, and for his knowledge of men. I would say La Bruyère, who died of apoplexy at Versailles, after having surpassed Theophrastus in taking him for his model, and having painted the men of our time in his 'Nouveaux Caractères' in an inimitable manner. He was besides a very worthy man (*fort honnête homme*), a pleasant companion, simple, with nothing of the pedant, very disinterested. I knew him well enough to regret him."

This summary of good qualities scarcely satisfies the demands of modern research, and M. Edouard Fournier, in his 'Comédie de Bruyère,' has found material for a psychological study in the passing notices of the day. Boileau, for instance, writing to Racine (May 1687), speaks of a visit he had received from the author of the 'Characters,' "who would want nothing if nature had only made him as agreeable as he wishes to be." He seems to have dreaded the charge of pedantry, and did not always succeed in playing the fine gentleman. People who could not appreciate his talents found something to ridicule in his manner. He had sallies of somewhat awkward liveliness, alter-

nating with fits of silence and abstraction. All accounts agree that he was without the talent for conversation; and his life seems to have alternated between an eager curiosity to see, to hear, to know all that was passing, and a profound rumination upon what he had observed in this busy activity of eye and movement. Some of his characters of men, unequal, hasty, inquisitive, capricious, fanciful, are supposed to be self-portraiture. He was, in fact, as perhaps genius itself implies, two men, one for thought and one for action; the genius seldom affording the man much aid in the commerce of life. His present editor, in summing up these chance indications of a character, adds his view, that in the grave matter of religion, morals, and politics, he was *un prudent*. “He had the prudence of men much occupied with their own thoughts, to whom all external disturbance is an evil. A settled state of things (*une extreme décence au dehors*) is a necessary condition for independent thinkers of this class.” In one rare instance he was fortune’s favourite, that from the first his book was appreciated and read with avidity. The form helped this early popularity. Society was eager to give names to his characters. Malignity, as it was said, contributed to the early success of his work. He seems to have been anxious to disown this personal application in many instances, which is no wonder; but the cap fitted too close for the world, once put on the scent, to leave its hold, and the keys which were immediately circulated are lasting authorities. It is never made

clear how the subjects of these caustic representations took it. Nor do we observe that any inconvenience ensued from them to their author.

The romance of La Bruyère's history very properly attaches itself to his great work. Through it a young girl's name is indissolubly associated with his own. Everything he writes on woman shows the sentiment that youth is the period, not only for the graces of her body, but of her mind. Society, frivolity, vanity, hypocrisy, spoilt her after a time in his eyes. He is cynical towards the woman of fashion ; but woman in early girlhood is depicted by him with an exquisite appreciation. As his present editor says, the child represented to him the true ideal woman. What she grew into was the fault of the world, of her ill fortune, of husband, of lovers. There entered into his love of woman something of paternal tenderness. Those who know the story of his manuscript will bear its repetition for the sake of others who do not. It chanced that Michallet, the bookseller to whose shop he daily repaired to hear the news and turn over the new books, had a little daughter, *fort gentille*, with whom he made friends and amused himself. Playing one day with this child, he took out of his pocket the manuscript of his 'Caractères,' and offered it to Michallet, saying, "If you get anything by it, let it be the *dôt* of my little friend here." In a pamphlet dated 1701, which gives the portraits and reputed wealth of the financiers of the day, there is a notice of Remi de Jullly, *fermier général*, who married

Michallet's daughter, La Bruyère's little friend, receiving with her a fortune of a hundred thousand livres. Never, says M. Asselineau, was a girl dowered with so much wit and wisdom in money's worth. An anecdote like this gives a body to the often vague and merely ornamental term, disinterested.

It is our object to give to the reader not familiar with the original some idea of a French writer in the truest sense a classic ; whose work, as far as we know, has not been translated into English, probably because its essence has been felt too volatile for translation. Perhaps this may especially be said of the style of all humorists, amongst whom we class La Bruyère, rather than with wits. Humour is flavoured by the personality of the writer almost more than wit. A striking felicity, whether of thought, of penetration, of satire, may change its whole character with its vehicle of expression : it may shock us as *outré*; it may sink into common-sense, or even commonplace, in an uncongenial diction. We will therefore first justify our own appreciation by the testimony of a great modern critic, Sainte-Beuve, who thus apostrophises the genius of his countryman after two hundred years of fame : “ Happy La Bruyère ! (*Heureux homme que La Bruyère !*) when so many more lofty glories have sunk, when the eighteenth century has passed away, and men speak of it as of an old fashion —when the seventeenth itself is exposed to attack on all sides, to the irreverence and incredulity of new schools—he, as if by a miracle, is alone respected, he

alone holds his own, he is spared. What do I say ? He is read, he is admired, he is praised, precisely for the marked incisive manner, a little too strong perhaps for his own time, but which is no more than we require now. Of this style he remains the first model. Fénélon, all Fénélon, pales and vanishes ; but his colours stand as bright as when first laid on the canvas. Time has deprived his solid and vigorous manner of no excellence. The artist has not ceased to reverence him. . . . He is still everybody's classic (*classique de tout le monde*).” “Happy La Bruyère !” adds the editor, in conclusion. “Whilst other and greater names compromised their destinies and their genius in the miserable agitations of public life and social entanglements (*relations mondaines*), he led an obscure life, the more surely to secure future fame. Having lived worthily, he has immortalised his name by a unique work, and has left to posterity nothing of himself but his genius.”

Of the sixteen subjects into which La Bruyère classes his thoughts and characters, he chooses to begin with that which touches upon his own relation with his readers, *Des Ouvrages de l'Esprit*—prefacing all with the words, “I restore to the Public what it has lent me. From it I have borrowed the matter of this work : it is just that having finished it with all the attention to truth of which I was capable, and which it deserves from me, I should restore it to the Public, that it may scrutinise at its leisure this portrait, taken after nature ; and if it owns to any

of the faults I have touched upon, that it may correct itself of them. . . . It is the only end an author ought to propose to himself." He writes with the consciousness at once of merit and of care. He would not have his readers neglect the order of his chapters. All is done with design. Nor must they restrict his range to his own countrymen or the Court of France. His was a wider field—his subject was human nature itself. And after this exordium he enters upon the subject of books—book-making ancient and modern—authors and critics; betraying some personal experiences, while hinting at the vicissitudes of feeling that accompany the supreme effort of thought. He is curiously candid, and lets us know that he turns his phrases as solicitously as a poet his lines. There is nothing of the modern *laisser aller*, letting the style take care of itself. In fact, a thought is not presentable, or worthy to be called one, till put in the best form. "Among all the different expressions which can render a single thought, there is," he says, "but one good one. We do not always hit upon it in speaking or writing. 'Tis true, nevertheless, that it exists. Anything else is feeble, and does not satisfy a man of wit and intelligence who wants to make himself understood." It is a question of conscience with him. "If you would write naturally, vigorously, delicately, you must *express the truth*." "A good author who writes with care, often finds the expression long sought for and found at last is the simplest and most natural one; which seems as if it should have presented itself

first of all." This must be true in a sort of all writing whose praise is its simplicity: we cannot imagine it otherwise with much of Addison, or of certain imitable examples of the *naïf* in the 'Lettres Provinciales.' Yet this care is mostly its own reward; for "Fools read a book and don't understand it. Commonplace readers (*les esprits médiocres*) assume that they understand it perfectly. Men of large intelligence do not always understand the whole—what is obscure they find obscure, and what is clear they find clear. Persons of showy parts (*les beaux esprits*) profess to see difficulties where there are none, and won't understand what is perfectly easy." To understand with him means a fuller apprehension than the ordinary reader or listener supposes. "Certain poets," he observes, "have recourse in their dramas to long strains of pompous verse, which seem full of vigorous, elevated, and noble sentiments. The people listen greedily, eyes uplifted, mouth open, and believe themselves charmed. The less they understand the more they admire. Scarcely do they take time to breathe, or to clap and applaud. I used to believe in my early youth that these passages were clear and intelligible to the actors, to the pit and amphitheatre—that their authors knew what they themselves meant, and that, with all the attention I could bestow, it was my own fault that I could not follow. I am undeceived." Popular taste in his opinion equals popular intelligence. "Wherever you go," he remarks, "whether to a sermon, a concert, or a picture-gallery, you hear

diametrically opposite opinions of the same thing, and may safely set good and bad side by side. The good will please some, the bad others. You risk nothing in putting the worst along with them. The worst has its partisans."

The next subject, *Du Mérite Personnel*, opens with a reflection which Johnson, too, has put into words. "Who, whatever his merits, however rare his talents, but must be convinced of his uselessness when he considers that in dying he leaves a world which does not feel his loss, and where there are so many to replace him?" Still he has an intense appreciation of success, and merit unrecognised presses upon his sympathy as a constant pain. It was one of the evils of the system under which he lived. "How many men of admirable genius have died without the world knowing anything of them; how many live still of whom no one speaks, of whom no one ever will speak?" "What *horrible* labour for a man without party or backers who stands alone, with only merit for his recommendation, to lift himself out of his obscurity into daylight, to rise to the level of the prig (*fat*) who has a reputation!"

"It needs in France," he observes, "much strength and largeness of mind to give up all thought of place and office, and to live at home and do nothing. Very few have merit enough to act this part with dignity, or weight (*fond*) enough to fill the void of time, without what the vulgar call business. The idleness of the wise man only wants another name,—that think-

ing, talking, reading, and being quiet should be called work." After personal merit he recommends less individual distinctions. "If a man can't be Erasmus, let him think of being a bishop." "Some people, to get themselves a name, heap upon their persons titles, orders, primacies, the purple. Scarcely would the tiara accomplish their end; but what need has *Trophimus* (Bossuet) to be a cardinal?" In illustration of his subject he gives at length a fine portrait of the great Condé, his patron; great in prosperity, greater still when fortune failed him: "whom the raising of a siege ennobled more than his triumphs, and got him more honour than battles won and cities taken; who could say, '*Je fuyois* with the same grace as *nous les battimes*.' A man—true, simple, magnanimous—who wanted nothing but the lesser virtues." In another character he shows the value of personal merit through the want of it. *Menippus* (according to the keys the Maréchal de Villeroy) is the bird in fine feathers that don't belong to him. He does not talk, he does not think; he repeats what other people say and think, and makes use so naturally of the mind of others, that he is the first deceived, and constantly supposes himself to be declaring his own taste or explaining his own view when he is but the echo of the person he has just left: for a quarter of an hour, so long as his memory holds out, he passes tolerably, then flags, degenerates, and betrays the machinery. He alone is ignorant how far he sinks below the sublime or heroic; and, incapable of estimating mind in

others, does not suppose anybody can be cleverer than himself."

By what process of the reason he makes *Des Femmes* his next subject is not very clear, but probably it was one his pen was very ready to exercise itself upon. We do not know how far it is reasonable to suppose affectation a vice of any particular date. Every age has its leaders and imitators—those who set the fashion in manners, and those who follow. Yet we imagine there was a certain deliberation and audacity in the affectation of La Bruyère's date which was particularly exasperating to the penetrating faculty. He must tell the ladies his mind, and that not with Addison's amusing lightness of touch, as if he was charmed in spite of himself, but taking their paint, and the manners that go along with a daubing of white and red, in grave earnest, and letting them know how very disagreeable they are to a man of sense. He views woman not in her home and domestic relations, but in the scene of her display, of her efforts and her ambitions, and especially in the idle love-making which seems to have constituted the one interest of society. He begins his subject by distinguishing between the real and the sham in this question of manner. The real great lady is an object of his reverence. "There is in some women an artificial distinction (*grandeur*), due to the movement of the eyes, the pose of the head, to step and motion, which goes no further; and a superficial brilliancy in conversation which imposes on us till we detect its shallowness. There is in others a

simple and natural nobleness of air, independent of step and gesture, which has its source in the heart, and, as it were, is a natural consequence of their high birth ; an intellect calm and solid, enhanced by a thousand graces, which all their modesty cannot hide, which transpire, and which those who have eyes can see.” “ If young girls only knew the advantage of a natural manner,” he cries, “ and knew how much it is for their interest to abandon themselves to it ; but they will weaken these rare and fragile gifts of heaven by affectation. Voice, step, everything is borrowed ; they study their mirrors to secure a sufficiently wide departure from nature, and take pains to please less.” So keenly did he feel the evil influences that surrounded woman in society, that there is pity in his severest strictures. He regards her as a victim—spoilt after two-and-twenty by the combined injuries to her moral sense of lovers and directors. In his short analyses of characters, as the *Coquette*, the *Femme Galante*, the *Femme Inconstante*, the *Femme Infidelle*, we have indications of a very frivolous and corrupt state of manners ; but all culminates in the *Femme Devote*, a character which combined itself easily with all the rest, adding that varnish of hypocrisy, which seems to have been a very prevalent fashion in the last years of the *Grand Monarque*. He shows a high opinion of the intellect of women, considering them the best letter-writers, and seems to reproach them for not cultivating their gifts. “ What laws are there to prevent their opening their eyes, their read-

ing, and showing that they read in their conversation ? Is not this custom of knowing nothing their own fault, either from the weakness of their temperament, or indolence of mind, or care of their beauty, or their talent for artistic work, or a natural repugnance for things serious and difficult ?” But to whatever cause men owe their ignorance of women, he congratulates his sex upon it, as saving them from an absolute and complete subjugation. Let us take a few thoughts at random, as results of his observation on society, and the attitude of fine gentlemen and ladies towards each other, from this chapter :—

“ It costs little to women to say what they do not feel. It costs less to men to say what they do feel.”

“ Women are in extremes. They are better or worse than men.”

“ A beautiful woman, with the qualities of a man of worth (*honnête homme*), is the most delightful companion in the world. She has the merit of both sexes.”

“ How many girls there are whose great beauty has done nothing more for them but lead them to hope for a great fortune !”

“ There are few women so perfect as to prevent a man repenting once a-day that he was ever married, or envying those who are not.”

“ People look on a learned woman as they do on some finely-wrought weapon out of vogue. It is chased artistically, admirably polished, of choicest workmanship. Its place is in a collection to be shown to the curious as something for which there is no use. Good neither for war nor the chase, any more than a circus horse, though trained to the highest point in its own line.”

“ It sometimes happens that a woman conceals from a man all the passion she feels for him ; while, on his side, he feigns for her what he does not feel.”

“ I would that I might cry aloud with all my might to those holy men who have once felt the dangerous influence of women,

‘Fly from them ; do not direct them ; leave to others the charge of their soul’s health.’”

There is so much in the admirable chapter on Conversation—*De la Société et de la Conversation*—that choice of examples is difficult. It contains the celebrated, and, as contemporaries knew, just character of M. d’Aubigné, brother of Madame de Maintenon, who figures as an outrage upon every rule of social intercourse :—

“I hear *Theodectus* from the ante-chamber. He raises his voice as he approaches. He comes in ; he laughs, he shouts, he bawls ; one stops one’s ears—it is a thunder-clap. He is not less terrible in the things he says than in his way of saying them : he only subsides out of the first din of his entrance to stutter out empty absurdities. He has so little respect for time, or persons, or good manners, that everybody comes in for his share of this impertinence without his meaning it. Before he has taken his seat he has unknowingly offended the whole company. Is dinner served ? He sits down first, and in the first place, ladies on his right and left. He eats, he drinks, he tells stories, he jokes, he interrupts all at once ; he has no sense of the claims either of master or guests ; he abuses the absurd deference people show him. Does he, or *Eutidemus*, give the entertainment ? He assumes the direction of everything ; and it is less trouble to leave him alone than to dispute the matter with him. Wine and good cheer make no difference in him. If play is introduced he wins, laughs at the loser, and offends him ; but the laughers are all on his side ; there is no fatuity which is not allowed to pass. I give in at last, and disappear, incapable of tolerating *Theodectus* any longer, or those who tolerate him.”

His advice on the subject of conversation is mainly repressive, as addressing a nation of talkers whose object is success. “The spirit of conversation,” he says, “consists far less in shining yourself than in leading others to talk. He who leaves you content

with himself and the part he has played, will be perfectly satisfied with you. Men do not care to admire you, they want to please, and care less to be instructed, or even amused, than to be appreciated and applauded ; and the most refined of all pleasures is that of making the pleasure of others.” He is especially indignant at all tricks with the language and efforts at fine speaking, and breaks out, in startling remonstrance : “ How ! what do you say ? I do not follow you. Be so good as to begin again. Still I don’t understand. I guess at last ; you wish, *Acis*, to tell me it is cold : why didn’t you say it is cold ? You want me to know that it rains or snows—say it rains, it snows ; you think me looking well, and wish to felicitate me upon it ; say you look well. But you answer, that is very straightforward and commonplace, everybody could say as much. What does that signify, *Acis* ? is it so great an evil to be understood when one speaks, and to talk like everybody else ? One thing you want, *Acis*—I am going to astonish you—one thing you want, that is sense (*esprit*),” &c.

In all excess of phrase he sees some form of weakness. “ To say modestly of anything, it is good or it is bad, and to give reasons why it is so, needs good sense and correct expression, and is not easy. It is much shorter to pronounce in decisive tone, which carries the proof with it, either that it is execrable or miraculous.” He dwells on the talkers who keep sensible people silent, and reflects what a misfortune (*grande misère*) it is not to have sense enough to talk

well, nor judgment enough to hold your tongue. This, he concludes, is the root of all impertinence. His analysis of the dogmatic tone accords with our experience. It is inspired by profound ignorance. “He who knows nothing undertakes to teach others what he has just learnt himself. He who knows much scarcely realises that others can be ignorant of what he tells them, and speaks very differently.”

La Bruyère’s disinterested spirit privileged him to treat the gifts of fortune—*des Biens de Fortune*—as a philosopher, and men’s subservience to wealth, with contempt; though in no subject does he affect an entire superiority to the general sentiment. His conclusions in every case are formed as much from introspection as observation. The enormous inequalities of condition, the prodigious fortunes rapidly accumulated in his day by farmers of the revenue, and the disposition of the Church’s wealth, offered a spectacle and suggested contrasts calling for the honest truth of his pen :—

“Contractors (*les partisans*) make us feel all the passions in turn. We begin by contempt for their obscurity, then follow envy, hatred, fear. Sometimes we esteem and respect them. They live long enough for us to regard them with compassion.”

He likens the growth of these large fortunes to the cooking of a great dinner—the results may be appetising and exquisite, but if you could only see the ingredients in preparation and the hands employed, what disgust and loathing !

“*Champagne* [recognised by the keys as one *Mounerot*] leaving the dinner-table, his stomach agreeably inflated, pleasant fumes of wine in his head, signs an order which is presented to him, and which would have deprived a whole province of bread if the mistake had not been found out. He is excusable. How can you expect a man in the first hour of digestion to understand that others may die of hunger?”

In the same strain our own poet moralises—

“And wretches hang that jurymen may dine.”

“*Arfura* [a certain Madame de Belizani] used to go alone and on foot towards the great portico of St —, heard from a distance the sermon of a Carmelite or doctor, seeing him at cross corners, and losing many of his words. Her virtue is obscure, and her devotion as little known as her person. Her husband enters into a lucrative contract. What a monstrous fortune in less than six years! She must go to church now in a coach. Some one carries her heavy train. The orator interrupts himself till she is seated in full front of him. She does not lose a word or least action. Priests intrigue to be her confessor; everybody wants to absolve her. The *cure* carries off the prize.

“That gay bachelor [*garçon*]—Charles Maurice de Tellier, Archbishop of Rheims] so fresh and florid, and in such beaming health, is lord of an abbey and six other benefices, which altogether bring him in a hundred and twenty thousand livres a year, paid in gold pieces. Elsewhere there are a hundred and twenty indigent families who never warm themselves in winter, who have not clothes to cover them, who often want bread: their poverty is extreme and shameful. What a division! And does not this tell us clearly of a future—*un avenir?*”

He uses an Oriental force of hyperbole in denouncing the oppressor:—

“Fly, retire; you are not far enough off. I tell you I am under the other tropic; pass under the pole and into another hemisphere; mount to the stars, if you can; *m'y voilà*. Very well; then you are safe. I discover upon the earth a man greedy, insatiable, inexorable, determined, at the expense of whoever crosses his path and whatever it may cost others, to

look after himself alone, swell his own fortune, and gorge himself with gold."

He consoles the reader with his experience that as nothing *lasts* but a moderate (*médiocre*) fortune, you may expect to see the end of all overgrown ones. Features, he observes, indicate the temperament and manners. It is the *mine*—the set of them—which tells us a man's wealth. The more or the less than a thousand livres a-year is written on the countenance. As for rising in the world, there are but two modes of doing it—either through your own industry or the imbecility of others. But after all, what a trouble! "If you have forgotten nothing, and make your fortune, what labour! if you neglect the smallest thing, what regrets!"

Attractive as it is, we must not linger on the chapter *De la Cour*, of which he truly says, as we may now say of its successor, High Society, "It does not make us happy, but it prevents our being happy anywhere else." He meditates on *Les Grands*, grudging them not their luxury and parade, their apes and their dwarfs, but the fact that they have at their service the best and highest intelligences—men who not only equal them in heart and sense, but *les passent quelque fois*. He is severe on a certain false modesty affected by the great. It is pure hypocrisy in men of a certain rank not to take the place due to them, and which everybody yields to them. "For it costs him nothing to be modest, to mix in the crowd which opens a way for him, to take a low place in an

assemblage which nobody will allow him to keep. Modesty is of much harder practice to men of ordinary condition. If they throw themselves into the crowd they get elbowed ; if they choose an inconvenient place they must even stay there.” It is from this point of view that he surveys life—the ordinary mediocre condition ; mixing with the great and wealthy, but personally neither one nor the other. How is a man to hold his own and retain his self-respect under the circumstances ?

The chapter *De l’Homme* opens with the argument already quoted—that it is no use being angry with men for their vices. The way, of course, not to be angry with these things, is to make their analysis your business. La Bruyère would have found his time heavy on his hands upon any root and branch reformation in the human family. Yet surprise is sometimes struck out by thought. Things approved and familiar, which only remotely refer to human frailty, force the fact upon him : as when he exclaims, “Parchments (deeds) invented to make men remember, or to convince men of their word. Shame of humanity !” In this chapter he reviews humanity from childhood to old age ; speculates on life and death, on man’s sins, frailties, eccentricities. From this section Addison borrows his portrait of the absent man, “which La Bruyère has pushed to an agreeable extravagance :”—

“Menaleas comes down in the morning, opens his door to go out, but shuts it again, because he perceives that he has his

night-cap on ; and, examining himself further, finds that he is but half-shaved, that he has stuck his sword on his right side, and that his stockings are about his heels. When he is dressed he goes to court, comes into the drawing-room, and, walking bolt-upright under a branch of candlesticks, his wig is caught up by one of them, and hangs dangling in the air. All the courtiers fall a-laughing. Menalcas laughs louder than any of them, and looks about for the person that is the jest of the company [or, as the original has it, ‘who shows his ears’]. Coming down to the court-gate, he finds a coach, which, taking for his own, he whips into it, and the coachman drives off, not doubting he carries his master. As soon as he stops, Menalcas throws himself out of the coach, crosses the court, ascends the staircase, and runs through all the chambers with the greatest familiarity, reposes himself upon a couch, and fancies himself at home. The master of the house at last comes in. Menalcas rises to receive him, and desires him to sit down. He talks, muses, and then talks again. The gentleman of the house is tired and amazed. Menalcas is no less so, but is every moment in hopes that his impertinent guest will at last end his tedious visit. Night comes, when Menalcas is hardly undeceived.

“When he is playing at backgammon, he calls for a full glass of wine and water. ‘Tis his turn to throw ; he has the box in one hand and his glass in the other ; and being extremely dry, and unwilling to lose time, he swallows down both the dice, and at the same time throws his wine into the tables. . . . He came once from his country house, and his own footmen undertook to rob him, and succeeded. They held a flambeau to his throat, and bade him deliver his purse. He did so, and coming home, told his friends he had been robbed. They desired to know the particulars. ‘Ask my servants,’ said Menalcas, ‘for they were with me.’”

There is much more, every trait finding some response in our own experience, or illustrating the manners of the day. In *De l'Homme* he moralises on life. His is, in contrast with many writers, a cheerful view. Thus Pascal dwells with his whole soul on the common heritage of misery, scarcely relieved by

vain struggles after forgetfulness and distraction. La Bruyère has observed what all experience will confirm, that “There are frightful and horrible calamities which we dare not think of, and the mere sight of which makes us shudder: if it happens to a man to encounter them, he finds resources in himself of which he was not aware, he stiffens himself against his misfortune, and bears it better than he could have hoped.” His estimate of the efficacy of distractions upon those less severely tried is a high one: “Sometimes it needs only the bequest of a pretty house, or to find yourself master of a fine horse or a dog, or but a piece of tapestry or a watch, to diminish the sense of a great loss.” The only grief, he tells us, that time does not soften, is the loss of property. He finds some whom no trials touch, who may be said to go through life incapable of them; feeling them by deputy:—

“*Ruffinus* shows some grey hairs, but he is healthy; his ruddy face and quick eye promise him twenty years more of vigorous life. He is gay, jovial, familiar, indifferent. He laughs heartily—laughs by himself without a subject. He is satisfied with himself, his belongings, and his small fortune. He says he is happy. He loses his only son, a youth of high promise, and who might one day have been an honour to his family. He turns over to others the task of grieving for him, and says, *my son is dead, it will kill his mother*; and he is consoled. He has no passions. He has neither friends nor enemies. Nothing disconcerts him nothing puts him out. Everybody suits him. He talks as freely to strangers as to those he calls old friends. The first man he meets is told all his jokes and good stories. People come and go without his observing it; and the story he begins to one listener, he finishes to another who happens to take his place.”

In the chapter *Des Jugemens*, he analyses the fool

in all his varieties. Elsewhere he has observed that there is in manner nothing so slight, simple, and almost imperceptible, which does not disclose something of the man. "A fool neither comes in nor goes out, nor sits down nor gets up, nor holds his tongue, nor stands on his legs like a man of sense." Into the distinction of *sot* and *fat* our language can hardly reach; for *fat* is scarcely prig, or fop, or simpleton. La Bruyère reduces fatuity to a scale. A fool (*sot*) is one who has not sense enough to be a *fat*. A *fat* is one whom fools take for a man of merit. The impertinent is an extreme *fat*. The *fat* tires, wearies, disgusts, repels; the impertinent repels, exasperates, enrages, offends—he begins where the other ends. *L'homme ridicule* is he who, only so long as he is one, has the appearance of a fool. The fool is always ridiculous; it is his character. "Sometimes he enters into it with spirit, but he never comes out of it." "Folly is in the fool, fatuity in the *fat*, and impertinence in the impertinent." Sometimes the ridiculous lies in a man being really ridiculous, and sometimes in the imagination of those who think they see it where it is not and cannot be. The *stupide* is a silent fool, and so far more sufferable than the talkative fool. "Fools and provincials always think you are laughing at them. You must never risk the mildest, most permissible pleasantry, except with persons of sense and politeness." "It would be a hopeless project to attempt turning a great fool, also very rich, into ridicule—the laughers are on his side."

Passing from fools, he speculates, among other strange things, on the genius that sometimes wears the appearance of folly or stupidity, and gives the portraits of La Fontaine and Corneille :—

“There is a man rough, heavy, stupid. He does not know how to talk, or to relate what he has just seen ; but if he sits down to write it, it is the model of good stories. He makes animals, trees, stones, all silent things talk. All is lightness, elegance, exquisite nature and delicacy. Another is simple, timid, wearisome in his talk. He uses one word for another, and estimates the value of his work by the money it brings him. He can neither recite nor read his own writings. See him inspired by composition,—he is not below Augustus, Pompey, Heraclius ! He is a king, and a great king ; he is a politician, a philosopher. He undertakes to make heroes speak, to make them act. He paints Romans ; they are greater and more Roman in his verses than in their history.”

We have no space for the larger portrait of *Theodas* —his friend Santeuil—a greater anomaly than any, who took the caricature of himself in good part, which describes him one “who speaks like a fool, and thinks like a man of sense,” reminding one of many subsequent epigrams. In *La Mode* he dwells on the caprices and tyrannies of fashion—touches on the men’s dress and the ladies’ heads ; but his examples are taken from other exhibitions of subjection to a reigning taste. When he placed his *Onuphras*, a rival hypocrite to Molière’s Tartuffe, in this division of his great subject, it was to let his reader understand that he viewed much of the religion of the day (the latter part of Louis XIV.’s reign), as purely a fashion ; or, as he elsewhere puts it—“*Un faux dévot* is he who,

under an atheistical king, would be an atheist." We prefer taking as an example, from this subject, his innocent tulip-fancier, one Caboust, an *avocat* employed in the house of Condé.

"The florist has a garden in the faubourg ; he hastens to it as the sun rises, and only returns when it sets. You see him transfixed, as though he had taken root in the midst of his tulips, and before the *Solitaire*. He surveys it with all his eyes ; he rubs his hands, he stoops, he looks close, he has never seen it so beautiful ; his heart swells with joy. He leaves it for the *Orientale*—he turns to the *Veuve*, he passes on to the *Drap d'Or*, from thence to *l'Agathe*, from whence he returns to the *Solitaire*, where he stands till he is tired, where he sits, where he forgets his dinner ; so perfect is its shape, so exquisitely are the colours disposed. He contemplates it, he admires it. In all this it is not God or nature he admires ; he does not go beyond the bulb of his tulip, which he would not part with for a thousand crowns, and which he would give away for nothing when tulips are out of fashion and pinks take their place. This man, endowed with reason—who has a soul, a worship, a religion—returns to his home weary and hungry, but well satisfied with his day : he has seen some tulips."

In the chapter *Sur quelques Usages*, he begins by ridiculing the successful efforts of *roturiers* to provide themselves with arms and an ancestry. He has known the crown transferred from the *bourgeois'* shop-sign to the panel of his coach. He notes the power that lurks in humanity to believe its own lies. A rustic, by dint of saying that he has seen a miracle, persuades himself that he has seen one. He who perseveres in concealing his age, ends by believing himself young. In the same way the *roturier* who habitually derives his origin from some ancient baron, from whom in

truth he does not descend, has the pleasure at length of believing that he does. "I take this opportunity to declare," says our author—"that the world may be prepared, and nobody taken by surprise if it should happen that some great man takes me under his wing, or if I make a great fortune—that there is a Geoffrey de la Bruyère whom all the chronicles rank among the greatest *seigneurs* of France, who followed Godfrey de Bouillon to the Holy Land, from whom I descend in a direct line." The same section has comments on the monstrous anomalies prevalent in the Church, and taken as a matter of course; on the strange inconsistencies of domestic life and marriage; on the abuses and tyrannies of the law,—which lead him to remark, "I might say pretty certainly of myself that I shall never be a thief or a murderer—but it is a bold word to say I shall never be punished as such." On the vexed question of medicine, "neither satire nor the theatre," he observes, "diminish the doctors' incomes. They marry their daughters, and place their sons in Parliament and the prelacy, and the laughers and satirists themselves furnish the money. The day arrives when the healthy become sick; they want people whose business it is to tell them they will not die. So long as men may die who want to live, the doctor will be laughed at and paid." In this section we find the strange character of *Hermippus*, the man who runs counter to custom in all his habits—one, we imagine, which will find response in every one's experience:—

"Hermippus is the slave of what he calls his little conveniences. To them he sacrifices received usage, custom, fashion, and politeness. He is always contriving for them, and changing a small improvement for what he thinks a greater. He neglects nothing in this line, but makes it his great study ; not a day passes without some discovery. He leaves to other men the ceremonies of dinner and supper, and scarcely acknowledges such terms ; for him, he eats when he is hungry, and only what he particularly fancies. He stands by while his bed is made ; for where is the hand skilful and happy enough to enable him to sleep exactly as he likes to sleep ? He rarely goes out, and prefers to all other places the room where he is neither idle nor industrious—where he does not act, but bustles and muddles all day long in his dressing-gown. Most people depend servilely on the locksmith or the joiner, as they may need their services : but with Hermippus, if anything has to be filed, he has a file ; to be sawn, he has a saw ; if any nails have to be taken out, he has pincers at hand. You can't imagine the tool he has not got, and, to his mind, much better and more convenient than those in common use. He has new and unknown ones of his own invention, for which he himself has almost forgotten the use. Nobody can compare with him in a facility for making useless things. At one time it took ten steps from his bed to his closet : it takes but nine since some changes he has made. How many steps saved in a lifetime ! Elsewhere people must needs turn a key, push outward or draw towards them, and a door opens. What a trouble ! He has contrived to spare one of these movements ; but how ? This is a mystery not to be revealed. He is, in truth, a great master of mechanical expedients in those things nobody else cares about. Hermippus lets the daylight into his room by other means than through the window ; he has found the secret of getting up and down otherwise than by the stairs, and goes out and comes in much more conveniently than through the door."

We must not indulge ourselves in more characters at length. Gladly would we give *Gnathon*, the selfish man, in all his intercourse with his kind—at table, in church and theatre, on the journey—who pities nobody, recognises no ills but his own, his repletion and

his bile—who weeps for no other death, and only dreads his own, which he would gladly redeem by the extinction of the human race ;—or *Cliton*, the glutton —who only seems born to digest — who has never been known to expose himself to the horrible misfortune of an ill-cooked ragout or an indifferent glass of wine. “But he exists no longer. He had himself carried to the table up to his last sigh, and gave a dinner the day he died. Wherever he is, he eats still ; and, if he returns to this world, it will be to eat again.” A few sentences, taken at random, are all we have space for :—

“A bad man has it not in him to be a great man ; admire if you will his views, his projects, his conduct—exaggerate his cleverness in finding the best and shortest means to his ends. If these ends are bad, prudence has no part in them ; and where prudence is wanting, show me the greatness if you can.”

“People do not fly with the same wings in search of fortune as for trifles and fancies. There is a sense of freedom in following your caprices, and, on the contrary, of servitude in pursuing your advancement. It is natural to long for it, and yet not to labour after it—to believe yourself worthy to find without the effort of search.”

“Liberality consists less in giving much than in giving what is wanted (*à propos*).”

“There is pleasure in meeting the eyes of one on whom you are going to confer a benefit.”

“We must laugh before we are happy, for fear of dying without laughing at all.”

“Regretting those you love is happiness compared with living with those you hate.”

“The Court is like an edifice built of marble. It is composed of men hard and polished.”

“It is much less rare to meet with intellect than people who use what they have got, or who know how to apply that of others and put it to some use.”

“It would seem, on first thoughts, that part of the pleasure of princes was to inconvenience other people ; but no. Princes are like other men—they think of themselves, follow their taste, their passions, their conveniences. This is natural.”

“People [against general invitations] invite, offer their houses, their table, their services ; nothing costs anything (*ne coute*) but keeping your word.”

“Men do not begin to think of making their fortune till thirty—at fifty it is not made. They begin to build in their old age, and die at the point of painting and glazing.”

“The pleasure of criticism deprives us of the other pleasure of being keenly touched by beautiful things.”

“To think only of yourself and of the present is one great source of error in politics.”

“The flatterer has neither a sufficiently good opinion of himself nor of others.”

“How do you amuse yourself? how do you pass your time ? is the question alike of fools and men of intelligence. If I reply, I open my eyes and see, I open my ears and hear, I seek health, repose, liberty, it is saying nothing—it is no answer. Solid pleasures, great joys, the only real satisfactions of life, are not reckoned, do not make themselves felt. Do you play ? do you mask ? One must find an answer.”

“The spirit of moderation, and a certain wisdom in conduct, leave men in obscurity ; it needs great virtues to be known and admired, or perhaps great vices.”

Would-be wits, buffoons—*mauvais plaisants*—are objects of his particular disgust. Perhaps he suffered from them ; but we find something of the same feeling in Pascal in the startling saying—“*Discur de bons mots, mauvais caractère.*”

“So thick upon the ground are buffoons,” says our author, “that one treads on them. It rains this sort of insect in all countries. Real fun is a rare thing. To a man born with it, the gift needs delicate handling. It is not often that the man who makes us laugh wins our esteem.”

The book closes with these reflections :—

“A certain inequality of condition, which shall keep up order and subordination, is the work of God, and implies a divine law. A too great disproportion, such as we observe among men, is their work, is the law of the strongest.

“All extremes are vicious, and come from men. All compensation is just, and comes from God.

“If people don’t relish these characters, I am surprised ; if they do relish them, I am surprised all the same.”

La Bruyère was emphatically a believer—holding a sense of a God to be innate—an obedient son of the Church, accepting all its teaching, but tempering the national conformity, and by implication his own, by the observation that each man selected for himself an inner creed, according to his particular bent, from the great body of dogmatic formula. His criticisms and strictures are confined to the practical religion of the day, to modern abuses and developments, to ecclesiastical fopperies and worldliness, with intimations of further and darker departures from the spirit of the Gospel. But this world occupied his own mind and intellect ; and he wrote for men of the world, with the honest intention of showing them the way to live wisely and well in it. It was not man in his domestic and more private relations, but man in society, who employed and filled his thoughts ; not, of course, stopping there—his penetration reached beyond the scene of his scrutiny ; but he does not follow men home. It is as they show themselves to the world that he paints them, convicting them of meanness, pride, arrogance,

self-seeking, and all the train of vices fostered by luxury, idleness, and vanity, in their intercourse with one another.

All his art, all the graces of his style, go to set forth the attractiveness as well as virtue of honesty, simplicity, truth, and independence. He sees the ugliness of vice and selfishness, under whatever disguise, and makes us see it too. ‘*Les Caractères*’ is one of the books from which the reader ought to rise a wiser man. And he will scarcely rise a sadder one; for the humours, the inconsistencies, the harmless peculiarities of men furnished so much matter, and are hit off with a truth so keen, a wit of felicitous expression so rare, that these qualities seem to transfer themselves to his own mind, illuminating it with a sudden sense of insight and perception. As a friend of bright intelligence (introduced to the book for the first time) wrote, after a delighted glance through its pages: “Thank you for introducing us to La Bruyère. Most excellent I think he is—so true, so simple, so natural. Exactly what I should have said myself.”

Those of our readers who are familiar with this classic are likely to reproach us, under the disappointing unsatisfactory veil of translation, with not having chosen our extracts well. They will certainly miss many of their most favourite thoughts and characters; but the work is so varied, runs through so wide a range of subjects, all treated with the same happy conscientiousness, the same mind busy upon them, that it is

impossible to convey any adequate idea in a few pages. We shall be satisfied if, by what we have said and quoted, we tempt those who have only hitherto known La Bruyère as a name, to procure his ‘Characters’ in the original and read for themselves.

THE FOUR AGES.

ALL the thought that gets hold of the world's ear and imprints itself on the memory, all sententious wisdom and all sentimental poetry, agree in disparaging the later half of man's life. Life naturally divides itself into four ages—childhood, youth, middle life, and old age. The poet, the man of the world, and the moralist, are of one mind to centre all the charm, beauty, and joy of life upon the two first of these conditions, and to treat the remaining half, or it may well be three-fourths of existence, as at best a flat, dull level of unromantic occupations, pleasures, and pains; more commonly a period of disappointment, failure, flagging hopes, discontent, and bodily suffering,—of losses which find no compensation; where we are daily losing what we desire to keep: a period in which it is ignoble to feel satisfaction, and truest philosophy to make short work of, and confound at once with old age. And so much are people the prey to popular impressions, and so apt to be guided by

the prevailing tone—so prone, we will add, to ingratitude for blessings which come as a matter of course—that they raise no remonstrance, and affect to acquiesce in sentiments which their life and aspect alike contradict. Who dares stand up for that mental prime—forty or forty-five?—with some it is fifty; who ventures to set at its true worth as an element of happiness, liberty of action? What man has the courage to set his gains through thought and experience against his losses in youthful ardour? He is ready enough to estimate time's maturing benefits in his case, above the rising aspirant's flash and fire of youth; but it is a mark of genius to have had unutterable communings in the spring of existence, whisperings which the inevitable discords of life have silenced;—few can forego a claim to such elevating regrets.

As nothing is morally salutary but the truth, we take exception to this tone as a general experience. It fits certain temperaments of passionate sensibility, it follows naturally upon a youth of brilliant promise; but it is not real with the majority, and it leads to two opposite mischiefs. This excessive exaltation of youth leads the vain and frivolous on to greater frivolity and vanity; and some, who are neither the one nor the other, it almost excuses and justifies in their recoil from the inevitable yoke of years and their melancholy clinging to habits and companionship which no longer become them, and where they are not welcome. Those, on the other hand, who alike

disdain fraud or self-deception, or to linger where they are not wanted, officiously anticipate the world's judgment, resolving to be beforehand with the insolence of youth, or gossip's cold scrutiny; and so do injustice to their manhood—the period of performance, the week-day of labour, wherein is done the work of the world—and call themselves old before their time: an act of treachery towards self which is generally accompanied by similar treachery towards contemporaries; for no one affects age prematurely who does not, as far as he can, drag all his youth's intimates down-hill along with him. “When people grow old, as you and I do,” says a man of this temper to some friend, on whose unaccustomed ear the epithet falls chill and strange, “others do not care for us, but we seem wiser to one another by finding fault with them. I daresay that monks never find out that they grow old fools when age gives them authority and nobody contradicts them.”

If the pleasures and dignities of middle life were acknowledged as frankly as they are in reality appreciated and enjoyed, we should see less fantastic aping of youth (though this is an aspect of human folly unduly enlarged on by satire), and less of the contrary affectation. The true view of life, to put it in trite phrase, is that every stage has its pleasures as well as its duties, and in each the pleasures are real, not ghosts of pleasures. But to make life this harmonious whole, neither pleasures nor duties must be anticipated: not taken out of course, nor

hurried forward. Keep the child a child its full time, let not youth propel itself into manhood, and let manhood hold its own manfully, and not weakly, sheepishly, grumblingly, ungraciously, unthankfully shelve itself even in words—empty as they generally are, and not intended to carry weight—upon the period of passive experience and the borders of oblivion. When age really overtakes men, then, and often not till then, they value at its true worth the period answering to the summer and autumn of nature, the strength of maturity,—“*l'âge viril que nous n'estimons pas assez*,” says La Bruyère, — which they disparaged and miscalled while it lasted, because it was not the season of blossom and hope. Not that age is without its pleasures, which a thankful heart makes much of, and which recommend themselves to the observer as he sees

“Age steal to his allotted nook
Contented and serene ;”

for nothing cheers the whole prospect of life to the young like a picture of calm, bright, intelligent old age. And examples of such are not rarer to be met with than ideal examples of every age.

Very true—all people have not those accompaniments and privileges of middle age we have assigned to it: it sometimes suffers the loss of all things, while hope is left with a barren prospect scarcely to be gilded by any charm; but if they have, it makes very little difference in the strain we speak of, which comes

so naturally to the hand that holds the pen; for men are more themselves in speech and action than in silent weaving of sentences. It is the happy men of middle age, happy in their circumstances, men sleek and well nourished, who think it high-minded and poetical to be querulous towards the tract of life they are passing through. The truth is, most people go by looks: that part of their life when they were at their comeliest, when everything became them, when even follies were graceful, fascinates the memory. It is not the mind of youth but its body that is mainly sighed over;—that charm of grace, strength, and bloom; and a certain subtle sense of immortality that goes along with it. So long as most of the people we encounter are our seniors, death is regarded practically as a thing that does not concern us. It is so many older folks' turn first, so many must entertain the thought before it becomes necessarily our business. If young people die it is a sort of accident—it is not natural; so that even the death of the young scarcely disturbs this sense of immortality as the attribute of youth; for to the imagination they remain, wherever they are, the same. We cannot so easily accommodate the leanness, the massiveness, the stoop, the heightened or fading colouring of middle life, or the decrepitude of old age, to our ideas of another state of being. To feel immortal, then, on whatever grounds, is no doubt a sensation which passes off. It has no share in the serener pleasures we assert to be the attendants

of fairly prosperous middle life. But if we kept our good looks we should miss the warnings, and trouble ourselves much less about the other losses which time brings.

“ O youth ! for years so many and sweet
‘Tis known that thou and I were one,
I’ll think it but a fond conceit—
It cannot be that thou art gone !
Thy vesper bell hath not yet tolled.
And thou wert aye a masker bold !
What strange disguise hast thou put on
To make believe that thou art gone ?
I see these locks in silvery slips,
This drooping gait, this altered size :
But springtide blossoms on thy lips,
And tears take sunshine from thine eyes.”

Our subject naturally opens with childhood. Upon how it is passed depends emphatically the due progress of life through its successive stages ; and perhaps we realise most forcibly the value of nature’s silent method of operation by noting the effect of early deviation from it, whether deliberate or due to circumstances. It is a notable compensation for a life without marked successes, show or glory of any kind, that to such a condition the pleasures and satisfactions of life are meted out most equally. All greatness, every distinction that lifts men above their fellows at one period of their life, spoils the harmony of parts. An undue brilliancy of childhood or youth is apt to tell upon the stage that follows to its disadvantage. Each period should keep to nature’s programme ; hence the life of most solid and lasting happiness is unquestionably that which starts with

a secret unforced growth: whatever substitutes in infancy exhibition and achievement for the state of preparation, borrows some of the strength which manhood cannot lend with impunity, and tends to a weak, ineffectual middle life. For the most flagrant outrages upon nature's plan, for examples of childhood forced into action and publicity, tampered with and victimised, and denied the all-essential privilege of obscurity, we must look to the records of royal children, and follow their course in history; or it may be enough to take up the narratives of their tutors and governesses, elate with the dignity of the material on which to try their educational experiences. In the case of absolute monarchies, circumstances are too exacting to allow of privacy and secret growth. Unless there is some political reason for neglect, the children of the dynasty have a part to play as soon as they chip the shell, evidently in many cases to the lasting injury of physical, intellectual, or moral strength. And they can be taught to play it with propriety. A charming manner and a sense of importance can be instilled into a sucking child, separating it for ever from childhood's more fortunate conditions in which

"Children are blest and powerful ; their world lies
More justly balanced ; partly at their feet,
And part far from them :—sweetest melodies
Are those that are by distance made more sweet."

In the secret correspondence of Madame de Maintenon with her agent at the Spanish Court, we read of the

Prince of Asturias, the first Bourbon born in Spain, receiving the homage of the Spanish nobility when a baby of nineteen months. "Never," writes the Princess des Ursins, "was a ceremony performed with more pomp, order, and magnificence. The Prince himself gave his hand to kiss to those who kneeled before him, and as that lasted more than three hours, and he was attacked with hunger and sleep at the same moment, he began to cry, being quite exhausted with the exercise; but his nurse being sent for she relieved him, and he continued to hold out his little hand in the most charming manner." This Prince was equally prematurely set on the throne by the abdication of his father, when the small-pox put an end to a life which had run through all its natural share of action and events in childhood. Equally instructive is the account of the early years of that Duke of Burgundy, the boast of Fénelon, and father of Louis XV. The forcing process had, at the age of seven, turned this precocious child into a monster; only the language ordinarily applied to adult wickedness sufficed to describe the strength and vehemence of his passions. "He was the prey of every passion, and the slave of every pleasure! He was often ferocious and cruel. Inordinately proud, he looked upon men only as atoms with whom he had no sort of similarity whatever. But the brilliancy of his mind, and his penetration, were evident, even in his moments of greatest violence. His replies created astonishment in all who heard

them," &c. &c. A formidable pupil certainly to tackle with, especially as he must always be addressed "Sir." "I know not, Sir, whether you recollect what you said to me yesterday, That you knew who you were and who I am. It is my duty to inform you that you are ignorant of both the one and the other." The good bishop brings the young prince to reason and virtue, and, in his case, we may say he had the good fortune to die young—a model prince: but evidently he had outlived all this brilliancy; his short man's career was a failure. Not the least misfortune of these royal infants is the weight of learning in their tutors. Condillac, chosen preceptor to the Prince of Parma, composed a course of metaphysical lessons for his pupil of seven years, in which he made such progress that the complacent philosopher writes, that "his Highness" of that tender age "was perfectly acquainted with the system of intellectual operations, and was in a condition to substitute just ideas for the false ones which had been given him." "Your Highness knows what is meant by a system"—deriving an analogy on this abstruse subject from his Highness's little chair as compared to his own big one.

And infant princes were turned into fine gentlemen by as rapid a process as they were made philosophers. These unfortunates were the subjects of journals carefully kept by their attendants. "I find," writes Madame de Genlis, to her little pupils of the Orleans family, "by the Journal of M. le Brun, that it was the

Duke of Montpensier who thought this morning of writing to inquire how I did after a slight indisposition. You left me yesterday in a calm state, and there was no reason for anxiety ; but consistently with the strict duties of friendship you ought to have given orders before you went to bed for inquiries to be made at eight o'clock in the morning to know whether I had had any return of my complaint during the night ; and you should again have sent at ten to learn from myself, the instant I awoke, the exact state of my health. Such are the benevolent and tender cares which a lively and sincere friendship dictates." Who can wonder at the dissimulation of the kings and princes of history, when make-believe and seeming were their earliest lessons ! It is certainly necessary to filling a great part well to be pretty early initiated into a sense of distinction ; but we may remark by the way that premature lessons in self-assertion—especially as they tamper with the simplicity of infancy, very naturally defeat their own end. We are told of the Princess Louise, eighth daughter of Louis XV., that when only three years old she was served in state. It was the custom when royal personages drank during their meals, for everybody to stand up. The governess observing her supercilious demeanour towards her attendants, requested them to forego this ceremony, upon which the little Princess immediately stopped drinking, and issued the stately order, " Debout, s'il vous plait ! Madame Louise boit." To judge from this example of premature dignity, it may be

taught too soon for its purpose. Louise early got tired of grandeur and went into a convent; but of the demeanour of her sister princesses in later life, we have some record. Horace Walpole writes of his visit to the French Court in 1765. After King and Queen he is introduced to the four Mesdames, the King's daughters, whom he describes in easy terms as "clumsy, plump old wenches, with a bad likeness of their father. They stand in a bedchamber in a row, with black cloaks and knotting-bags, looking good-humoured, and not knowing what to say." They could not be so very old, for their father at this time was only fifty-five; but youth so treated is soon run through. The insight into the training of princes given us by these complacent records of processes and triumphant results, goes far to excuse all the errors and failures of after-life. Life is made a conscious piece of acting from the first. Their part is given them too soon, nor is there an alternative of wholesome neglect. Neglect can only be wholesome where it is in a manner inevitable and surrounded by natural protections. Happily for modern princes, their tutors have left off writing about them, and illustrating their theories by appeals and references to their immature judgment. As far as obscurity is possible to lofty station, royal infancy in our days enjoys it. We have to borrow our examples from a past age.

As short-lived and not less precocious is infancy in the social opposite of existence. The literature of destitution is full of the premature sagacity of its

childhood. The *gamin* of Paris or London is a match in all the arts of dissimulation with the scion of a hundred tyrants; and the small rustic knave follows not far behind, masking his designs under an aspect of impervious stolidity. Nor are these evidences of a corrupt civilisation. Misery and bad company are the same forcing agents in the Far West, wherever the child is driven to its own guardianship. Witness Bret Harte's pictures of childhood: little Johnny more than the intellectual equal of "the old man" his father, and of the diggers, whose pet he is, and whose language he copies. "The child, whose face could have been pretty, but that it was darkened by knowledge of evil, and whose weak treble was broken by the hoarseness which vagabondage and premature self-assertion can give." It is a pathetic sketch—the child thrown entirely on his own sense and resources, at once so knowing and so ignorant, with his sad experience of sickness, and old-fashioned views of regimen. "Thar's dried appils," he says to his father's guests, "but I don't admire 'em; appils is swellin':" his long catalogue of diseases, of which he enjoys the repetition to his strong burly friends, who ask, "You ain't agoin' to turn in agin, are ye?" "Yes, I are," responded Johnny, decidedly. "Why, what's up, old fellow?" "I'm sick." "How sick?" "I've got a fevier and chilblains, and roomatiz," and, as he retreated into darkness and under his bed-clothes—"and biles!" The time is Christmas Eve. "What's Chrismiss?" he asks his father. "What's Chrismiss any way?

Wot's it all about?" "Oh, it's a day," is all his father can answer.

The child born under, happily, more ordinary circumstances, not subject to either of these extremes, has neither a part to play nor any sense of responsibility as to material wants. It trusts the guardianship of its wellbeing to its parents implicitly and without a thought, and pursues its speculations on the life before it quite apart from its own share in it. Nor are these speculations too curiously inquired into. It works out the problems of life at its leisure, no wise tutor forestalling every difficulty, and watching for every opportunity for instilling a maxim or opening out a field of inquiry. It is only by chance and some *naïve* revelation that we learn anything of the puzzles and comical bewilderments the mind passes through in the way from partial knowledge to a clear understanding, and how it slowly disentangles them for itself,—as when the little girl gravely remarked to her mother on the birth of a litter of kittens, "Mamma, I was not aware that ours was a married cat." The child may have a philosophic father to whom nothing is more interesting than to trace the course of thought and the steps of inquiry; but he has something else to do, which the tutor has not, than to urge his infant to crack hard metaphysic nuts with his first teeth. So when he hears of baby watching the horse he is used to stroke in the stable as he is being harnessed to the carriage, and still with a perplexed air turning his head to the empty stall to satisfy himself that he is

not there also, he only pronounces it an interesting observation. "Baby was testing an identical proposition by experience," and leaves him to discover, by degrees, that a thing can't be in two places at once. That great stimulator of the faculties, a good down-right passion, visits small and great alike; but on isolated royalty it is allowed to become gigantic, generating a morbid self-consuming intelligence. The child of ordinary life has his tempers quickening the intellect in the same way, and prompting the inexperienced tongue to very apt language. Duly provoked, he will rattle off a string of motives and reveal his inner mind with a clearness which leaves nothing to be desired. A little fellow of three, irritated first by the refusal of his brother's toys, and then when Freddy is carried off, by a somewhat ostentatious permission to play with them, lays bare the whole principle of contradiction without a pause to take breath: "I don't want it, now Freddy is gone, and I shall want it when he comes back again; and Freddy shall have it when he is naughty, and he shan't have it when he is good; and when he wants it he shan't have it, and when he doesn't want it he shall have it." Where there is no easy natural check, such a tantrum might set a formal long-worded machinery of admonition at work, or, if left to itself, possibly issue in a temper really formidable. The child, among a crowd of equals, finds his level, learns to give and take, subdued to reason and forbearance by the friendly force and pressure of circumstances. Admonition in its

place is excellent, but the most telling teaching of all is that which the child acquires for himself from the favouring influences about him, and this teaching is most effectual—is, we may say, the prerogative of middle station.

But if childhood finds its most congenial home in middle station, it may be granted that Youth shows in greatest splendour when set off by rank and wealth and fashion. It is the period—the one age—which may be said to need room, a broad, well-lighted theatre, for its more brilliant display. If people could be always young and sustain unchecked their powers of receiving and imparting pleasurable excitement, they would choose well (for this world at least) in choosing to be lords and ladies. Society is a theatre planned for their interest and to show them to the highest advantage. The heir of fame and name and fortune, every grace of person and manner sedulously cultivated, all the world indulgent, deferential, solicitous to admire, has only to be willing to please to out-top all rivals; and if the heir—what of the heiress? all art, all fancy, is inspired by high-born beauty in its early prime of imperial loveliness. Earth has not anything to show more fair to the painter or the poet than the brilliant glorified youth of the great;—of youth and maiden, trained in the school of gracious manners, in all the traditions of sentiment and home of a cultivated, far-descended aristocracy; with broad manors and marble halls in ample conformity to their high deserts. But the pity is that

this reign is short-lived. The vista to this golden glory is too brilliant not to tempt to undue hurry into it; and Childhood shortened does not imply youth prolonged. The pace of life is too quick for even the feeling of youth to remain in undisturbed quiet possession. The young man has no pleasures to wait for. The only possibility of man forgetting the flight of time is to have something to do more engrossing than what is called pleasure. Business — work of some kind—is absolutely necessary to sustain the feeling of youth; for work keeps up the idea of learning and incompleteness. The distinctions of youth, what it excels in, are not accomplishments that improve; the only hope and endeavour is to maintain them at their present level. The beauty of a season or two has too many observers counting them up not to be aware of the passage of time; it becomes a haunting idea when it interferes so conspicuously with the prestige and hopes of life. There is a trepidation, a watching for signs when the first exultant pride of beauty in its freshness is over. Georges Sand makes one of her heroines scream at the first faint suspicion of a wrinkle. And while its glory lasts there is naturally an eager craving for its appreciation, a conscious sense of a prize to be caught ere it passes which disturbs that poetic idea of careless, gay, dazzling youth so dear to the fancy. The celebrated Lady Townsend—fortunate in another string to her bow—wit succeeding to beauty—expressed herself anxious to see George the Third's coronation, as she had never seen one. “Why, Madam,

you walked at the last." "Yes, child," was her answer, "but I saw nothing of it; I only looked to see who looked at me."

And there is a premature prudence engendered by this exaggerated sense of the fleetingness of youth as well as a self-absorbed vanity in conscious possession. Nature makes the blossoming season short; but, precipitating, hastening on the time of bloom, makes it shorter still. The girl ceases to feel a girl in high rank much sooner than in a middle condition; high and low alike, through different causes, entering early upon the dry experience of life. It is those who rank neither with rich nor poor, who have to recognise waiting as a condition of youth, and to be patient under it, who, by the holding out of expectation, feel young the longest. Society by no means arranges itself for the especial convenience of the youth of the middle classes. They have to bide their time and to live upon hope. Horace Walpole commends to his friend the good sense of his niece Charlotte on occasion of her receiving proposals from Lord Dysart, whom she did not know by sight, and who wanted to marry her within a week. She said to her sister Waldegrave "very sensibly," "If I was but nineteen I would refuse him point-blank. I do not like to be married in a week to a man I never saw. But I am two-and-twenty; some people say I am handsome, some say I am not; *I believe the truth is I am likely to be large and to go off soon*—it is dangerous to refuse so great a match." "She came and saw this imperious lover, and I believe

was glad she had not refused him point-blank, for they were married last Thursday—that is, in a week.” It is not nature here that makes youth short-lived; a girl unhackneyed is still a girl at twenty-two, fresh, full of hope and expectation, with her life before her, no airs of stale worldly wisdom tainting the sense of spring and hope. It is not nature that hurries life out of its spring; it is the work of men and women, a plot against reason which possesses a frivolous society from first to last, making youth everything till all the rest of life is mourned over as a falling-off, a weary task, the day after the fair. Youth catches the tone, shortening its own span, chattering about broken illusions, and asking

“ Ah, what shall I be at fifty,
Should nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter,
When I am but twenty-five ? ”

Horace Walpole in his own person is a representative example of this tone, as his early life is an example of the brilliant spring which belongs to youth among the high-born who are fitted by manner, wit, and wealth to illustrate and enjoy it. Age is his *bête noire*; he cannot forget it; whether he jests or is serious we see it a prevailing dread. He adores the young, they constitute the charm of society, yet he hopes for no tenderness or sympathy from them, and is afraid of their contempt. He worships the memory of his own youth, its sparkling wit and social successes; he recognises no gains from thought and

experience, no compensations, and describes life about him or before him as only a repetition of old joys from which the spirit has fled, but which he yet prefers to all that maturity of thought or graver interests can offer. In society of ladies, addressing them in graceful *persiflage*, the thought is still uppermost. To Lady Hervey he describes the old life as the only one in which he can hope to be acceptable, and yet which he feels slipping out of, with a banter which is only yearning in disguise. "My resolutions for growing old and staid are admirable. I wake with a sober plan and intend to pass the day with my friends, then comes the Duke of Richmond and hurries me down to Whitehall to dinner; then the Duchess of Grafton sends for me to loo in Upper Grosvenor Street; before I can get thither I am begged to step to Kensington to give Mrs Anne Pitt my opinion about a bow-window; after that I am to walk with Miss Pelham in the terrace till two in the morning, because it is moonlight and her chair is not come. All this does not help my morning laziness, and by the time I have breakfasted, fed my birds and my squirrels, and dressed, there is an auction ready; in short, Madam, this was my life last week, and is, I think, every week, with the addition of forty episodes; so pray forgive me; I really will begin to be between forty and fifty by the time I am fourscore." The age between forty and fifty is a capital working age, but when more than half these years have been spent in precisely the same round, the pleasure may well be dashed with fore-

bodings, for it is a late age to take to being serious. What his real feelings are we learn from a letter to his friend George Montagu written two days later. "The less one is disposed, if one has any sense, to talk of one's self to people that inquire only out of compliment, the more satisfaction one feels in indulging a self-complacency, by sighing to those that really sympathise with our griefs. Do not think it is pain that makes me give this low-spirited air to my letter. No, it is the prospect of what is to come, and the sensation of what is passing that effects me. The loss of youth is melancholy enough, but to enter into old age through the gate of infirmity, most disheartening." He suffered, it will be remembered, from gout. "I have not the conscience to trouble young people when I can no longer be juvenile as they are, and I am tired of the world, its politics, its pursuits, and its pleasures, but it will cost me some struggles before I submit to be tender and careful. Christ! Can I ever stoop to the regimen of old age? I do not wish to dress up a withered person, nor drag it about to public places, but to sit in one's room clothed warmly, expecting visits from folks I don't wish to see, and tendered and flattered by relations impatient for one's death. Let the gout do its worst. . . . Nobody can have truly enjoyed the advantages of youth, health, and spirits, who is content to exist without the two last, which alone bear any resemblance to the first." It is the success, prominence, and brilliancy of his youth that is answerable for this tone. The busy worker has a

succession of springs. Walpole can only look back. "Unlike most people that are growing old, I am convinced that nothing is charming but what appeared important to one's youth, which afterwards passes for follies. Oh! but those follies were sincere; if the pursuits of age are so they are sincere alone to self-interest. This I think, and have no other care than not to think aloud. I would not have respectable youth think me an old fool." And the gloom increases as years advance. At sixty-six he describes himself as a ruin. "Dulness in the form of indolence grows upon me. I am inactive, lifeless, so indifferent to most things that I neither inquire after nor remember any topics that might enliven my letters. It would be folly in me to concern myself about new generations. How little a way can I see of their progress!" And yet he lived fourteen years after this, feeling older and older, though in the full possession of his faculties and even of his style. Can any one suppose that under different circumstances, under the stimulus of wholesome, because necessary occupation,—no careless, insolent triumph of youth to look back to, no peerage revealing how long that youth was past, no consciousness of being an object of curiosity or observation when no longer worth looking at,—Horace Walpole would not have been a younger man at forty-seven and sixty-seven respectively, than these revelations show him?

Youth, which is graceful in its golden prime, too often develops or collapses into awkward unsightly

proportions. Sensitiveness as well as vanity suffers under the contrast. Who would not rather be one of the crowd of lookers-on than the observed of all observers on the occasion of the visit to Stowe he celebrates, where he was invited to meet the Princess Amelia, and an *al fresco* entertainment was arranged in the stately gardens and lamp-lit grotto ? “The evening being, as will happen, more than cool, and the destined spot anything but dry, as our procession descended the vast flight of steps into the garden, in which was assembled a crowd of people from Buckingham and the neighbouring villages, to see the princess and the show, the moon shining very bright, I could not help laughing as I surveyed our troop, which, instead of tripping lightly to such an Arcadian entertainment, were hobbling down by the balustrades, wrapped up in cloaks and greatcoats for fear of catching cold. The earl, you know, is bent double, the countess very lame ; I am a miserable walker, and the princess, though as strong as the Brunswick lion, makes no figure in going down fifty stone stairs. Except Lady Anne, and by courtesy Lady Mary, we were none of us young enough for a pastoral. These jaunts are too juvenile. I am ashamed to look back and remember in what year of Methuselah I was here first.” It is a very formidable penalty of rank and greatness never to be allowed to sink into personal insignificance. Quite apart from vanity must come the longing, when crowds come to see, to be something worth seeing. It is enough to account for the mis-

anthropy of some royal fops and belles, when self-flattery can no longer give the lie to the mirror's home truths.

"Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen ?
For only once, in the village street
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,
A grey old wolf, and a lean."

Industry, in whatever rank, keeps off the sense and dread of age. It is perhaps some decay of brain power in the indolent or idle which suggests it. The great leaders of parties know better than to put such ideas into other people's heads ; but also they have no leisure for speculation upon the mere progress of time. They accept work as the proper necessity of middle life, and the period of middle life lasts long where the faculties are all kept employed, and are found equal to the demands on them. The busy man, whether statesman or shopkeeper, has his mind, thoughts, plans all fixed on the future. He looks forward, which is the habit of youth, and thus keeps up the sensation when the fact is long past. But where the prizes of life come with youth without pains or care, comparatively few recognise the charm of work. It looks like duty only, if indeed it is that, to people who have already what most men work for. It is only the middle and lower classes who are driven to it on pain of want or loss of self-respect ; and perhaps it is in the middle class especially that it acts as an elixir. The poor age and fade under their toil, and can't help feeling and saying that they do, when strength and

agility fail them, and back and limbs ache under burdens that once were easy. Vigour of mind outlives vigour of limb. The lawyer and keen man of business are not reminded from within by the loss of power that the descent of the hill has begun, till long after the cottager and his wife look and call themselves old man and woman. Of course there are dangers in this unconsciousness. Men should always bear in mind that they are mortal; but the fret and moan of dissatisfaction, the murmur that youth is gone, leaving nothing else worth living for, is no better preparation for death than the loins girded and the lamps burning—than strenuous activity, even in temporal duties. If the poet, conscious that his leaf is sere, as he bids “fall, rosy garland, from my head,” can look forward—

“ Yet will I temperately rejoice ; ”

so may the middle life of the great middle class, so long as the world keeps it busy.

It is not the poetical view of youth that we are combating, but the cynical view of all the rest of life, which with so many is either an affectation or a needless gloom. Experience rarely fits in with the ideal—we scarcely think it does with the following tender monody which we find in Dr Newman’s sermon, entitled the Second Spring; but unquestionably youth under its more charming aspect is the most lovely spectacle granted to mortal eyes, and as such should be pictured and sung.

"How beautiful is the human heart when it puts forth its first leaves, and opens and rejoices in its spring-tide ! Fair as may be the bodily form, fairer far, in its green foliage and bright blossoms, is natural virtue. It blooms in the young, like some rich flower, so delicate, so fragrant, and so dazzling, generosity, lightness of heart and amiableness, the confiding spirit, the gentle temper, the elastic cheerfulness, the open hand, the pure affection, the noble aspiration, the heroic resolve, the romantic pursuit, the love in which self has no part—are not these beautiful ? and are they not dressed up and set forth for admiration in their best shapes, in tales and in poems ? and ah ! what a prospect of good is there ! Who could believe that it is to fade ! and yet as night follows upon day, as decrepitude follows upon health, so surely are failure, and overthrow, and annihilation, the issue of this natural virtue, if time only be allowed to it to run its course. There are those who are cut off in the first opening of this excellence, and then if we may trust their epitaphs, they have lived like angels ; but wait awhile, let them live on, let the course of life proceed, let the bright soul go through the fire and water of the world's temptations, and seductions, and corruptions, and transformations, and alas for the insufficiency of nature ! alas for its powerlessness to persevere, its waywardness in disappointing its own promise ! Wait till youth has become age, and not more different is the miniature we have of him when a boy, when every feature spoke of hope, put side by side with the large portrait painted to his honour when he is old, when his limbs are shrunk, his eye dim, his brow furrowed, and his hair grey, than differs the moral grace of that boyhood from the forbidding and repulsive aspect of his soul, now that he has lived to the age of man. For moroseness, and misanthropy, and selfishness, is the ordinary winter of that spring."

Exposed to the test by which age is tested, surely all these excellences of youth which issue in so dreary a winter will prove not only transient but illusory :—seeming and no more. Youth is the cunningest of all disguises,—looking back, we see the faults of the man to have been there all the

while ; the noble aspiration and generosity, judged by this key, vain self-confidence ; the elastic cheerfulness, mere animal spirits ; just as the misanthropy of later years resolves itself into bile. Man is so complex a being—presents so many sides and aspects, that a hundred dissimilar portraits may all be living likenesses. If our memory responds to this picture with some gracious answering image, it cannot deny or refuse its tribute in illustration of a directly opposite one. There is no selfishness so blind, remorseless, and merely animal as youthful selfishness in some terrible instances. The preaching of consequences does sometimes tell upon such natures ; they are more tolerable at fifty. Some touch of sympathy awakes in them. Experience humanises them. “ Wisdom and experience,” says Swift, “ which are divine qualities, are the properties of age, and youth in the want of them is contemptible. But I do not say this to mortify or discourage young men. I would not by any means have them despise themselves, for that is the ready way to be despised by others, and the consequences of contempt are fatal. For my part I take self-conceit and opinionativeness,” which he assumes to be the leading characteristic of young men, and their stock-in-trade, “ to be of all others the most useful and profitable qualities of the mind. It has to my knowledge made bishops and judges and smart writers, and pretty fellows and pleasant companions and good preachers.” The truth is that youth admits of as many interpreta-

tions as there are interpreters. The genius and temper of the observer give it its colour, and that temper, in all but the satirist, is indulgent. We are satisfied with youth if it only enjoys itself and frankly takes the good the gods provide, without reflecting that the boy is more often father to the man than his opposite: only his errors have a way of seeming transient; things don't look the same. What a different impression would Froissart's picture of himself make if he was describing the tastes of his maturity; yet the same easy joyous selfishness shows in boy and man. "Well I loved to see dances and carollings, well to hear minstrelsy and tales of glee, well to attach myself to those who loved hounds and hawks, well to toy with my fair companions at school, and methought I had the art well to win their grace. My ears quickened at the sound of uncorking the wine-flask, for I took great pleasure in drinking and in fair array, and in delicate and fresh cates. I love to see (as is reason) the early violets and the white and red roses, and also chambers fairly lighted; justs, dances, and late vigils, and fair beds for refreshment; and for my better repose a night draught of claret or Rochelle wine mingled with spice." Youth, which everything becomes, can be poetically selfish, but this cannot be managed in later years when reason and calculation come in. Pepys had exactly the same tastes as Froissart. But, instead of obeying his instincts without question, he explains matters to himself. "The truth is," he writes at thirty-three,

when conscious that youth was taking wing, "I do indulge myself a little the more in pleasure, knowing that this is the proper age of my life to do it; and out of my observation that most men that do thrive in the world do forget to take pleasure during the time that they are getting their estate, but reserve that till they have got one, then it is too late for them to enjoy it." But though more calculating he is less selfish as he gets older. The especial virtue of middle life—hospitality, redeems his indulgences from being mere personal gratification. Instead of feasting at other people's expense he entertains at his own. He describes an entertainment to his friends, beginning with dinner at noon, dancing jigs and country dances till two o'clock in the morning, finally lodging all his guests for the night, "and so broke up with extraordinary pleasure, as being one of the days and nights of my life spent with the greatest content, and that which I can but hope to repeat again a few times in my whole life." And a day or two after, counting up the cost, "This day my wife made it appear to me that my late entertainment this week cost me above £12, an expense which I am almost ashamed of; though it is but once in a great while, and is the end for which, in the most part, we live, to have such a merry day once or twice in a man's life."

Worldliness is assumed to be the one vice needing time for its development. Youth, conventionally speaking, is generous; middle age calculating and worldly. How often experience antedates the exhibi-

tion of this quality, each observer of life must determine for himself. Some whose business has been the study and delineation of human nature, affirm with confidence that selfishness shows itself equally betimes with the darker plague-spots of humanity. Lord Lytton has lately set men speculating on the age of murderers. Murderers, he says, are generally young men, and for the reason that it belongs to youth to begin the habit of miscalculating its own power in relation to the society in which you live. We learn from the newspapers that the fellows who murder their sweethearts are from two to six and twenty ; and persons who murder from other motives than love—that is, from revenge, avarice, or ambition—are generally about twenty-eight. Twenty-eight is the usual close of the active season for getting rid of one's fellow-creatures. No man, he tells us, ever commits "a first crime of a violent nature, such as murder, after thirty." It is something for the middle-aged man to feel himself out of the range of the more violent excesses ; but in fact, as men mostly *feel* young long after they cease to be so, the immunity is not realised.

We say that most men feel younger than they are, and this is perhaps because most men have not fulfilled in any degree their vague expectations for themselves, because they have as yet no sense of performance. Their shyness and reserve keep up a feeling of youth, while the faculty of effective, vehement expression, of compelling notice or a hearing, makes

people feel old. We have already said that premature distinction, any circumstance disorganising life's machinery, a rush into publicity from whatever cause, separates from childhood, and induces a sense of youth long left behind. The author, whose first book, written in youthful enthusiasm, succeeds, but whose mind "bears but one skimming," feels old. So long as people have, or believe they have, the best part of themselves still unrevealed, some choice faculty hidden from daylight, they feel young. The poet Cowper, victim as he was of low spirits, and an inner life of brooding despondency, yet betrays no premature sense of age; if he notes his grey hairs, it is to say the difference is more outside than in. Writing at the age of fifty-five, he says to Lady Hesketh, "I have, what perhaps you little suspect me of, in my nature an infinite share of ambition, but with it, I have at the same time, as you well know, an equal share of diffidence. To this combination of opposite qualities it has been owing, that till lately I stole through life without undertaking anything, yet always wishing to distinguish myself." The works that made his fame were composed in the ten years from fifty to sixty; his industry during this period, the exceeding quiet of his life, the simplicity of his tastes, and the constancy of his affections, held him all this time aloof as it were from the course of time. It is an effort for him to realise it. "It costs me not much difficulty," he writes to the same lady, whom he had not seen for years, "to suppose that my friends, who were already old

when I saw them last, are old still, but it costs me a good deal sometimes to think of those who were at that time young as being older than they were. I know not what impression Time may have made upon your person, for while his claws (as our grannams called them) strike deep furrows in some faces, he seems to sheathe them with much tenderness, as if fearful of doing injury, to others ; but though an enemy to the person, he is a friend to the mind, and you have found him so." To Cowper, his lady friends were always young and always attractive. We do not wonder at their tender devotion to him. Again, a full fruitful mind can never feel the saddening sense of ageing and slipping out of the race, because the finer temper is never satisfied with the work done, and hopes to do better—to be daily self-surpassed. So Dryden, felicitating the young poet, reserves one excellence as unattainable, short of mellow maturity :

"What could advancing age have given more ?
It might (what Nature never gives the young)
Have taught the numbers of thy native tongue ;
But satire needs not these, and wit will shine
Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line."

Everybody desires to live long, but nobody wants to be old, says Swift. In one sense this is not an unreasonable wish, for age simply counted by years is a very arbitrary mode of reckoning. If it could be foreseen how long the bodily and mental constitution would maintain their vigour, then the period of age setting in might be calculated with some accuracy. As it is,

many men of fifty are older than others a score years their senior. Decrepitude and deadened faculties are old age whenever they come. We of necessity use the term whether speaking of decay, or length of days ; but people may be excused from appropriating the epithet old to themselves when the spring of life still lasts in them. All vigorous septuagenarians resent the civilities of forward politeness, officious in its offer of assistance. Even those reverential marks of deference which have got the Spartan youth so much credit with posterity, would certainly not suit the taste of our more advanced civilisation. The astute man of the world, however many years he counts, prefers to meet men as equals while he meets them at all. It is only when a certain point is reached and retirement is courted, when age is alike felt and acknowledged a distinction by the bearer of a weight of years, and those who admire how worthily and reverently they are borne, that open demonstrations of respect are appropriate. While M. Thiers governed France, to obtrude his age upon him by any paraded act of reverence, would have been an impertinence. So long indeed as he takes an active part in public affairs it must still be such ; but it was a graceful mark of respect when Lord St Leonards came into court at Kingston the other day, for all the bar to rise, and by standing show their reverence for the venerable peer, the “ Nestor of the profession.”

No house, said Sydney Smith, is well fitted up in the country without people of all ages in it. There

must be an old man or woman to *pet*, he says: to *respect*, we add; for a child's first impressions of old age, such as influence the sentiment of a life, are caught from the tone around it. John Kemble's widow used to tell how her husband on a visit at some great house had the ill luck to throw down and break some little Lady Mary's favourite doll. The child stood in speechless indignation till her anger found vent in an epithet, the most disparaging she knew, "You are an *old man*." In a simpler household, where age was held in veneration, a child of some three or four years old was reading in Genesis to an ancient lady. "Are *you* as old as Methuselah?" he asked, in all innocence, looking up into the kindly wrinkled face. The old lady, tickled by the question, repeated it a year after in the presence of the boy's younger brother, who seeing people laugh felt an apology incumbent upon him. "I daresay," said he, "he only said it out of compliment."

The question of age to an ordinary man does not become a personal one so long as the majority of the people he meets, either in domestic life, society, or the street are his seniors. A man of sixty living exclusively with people of seventy or eighty would always feel young. We see this where an elderly daughter has the charge of parents, who engross her thoughts; until they die she scarcely realises her own standing; it adds perhaps a gloom to her life to find herself suddenly in another class—a generation older, a subject for that "powerful distemper old age," as Montaigne calls it.

It is one of the proper functions of Old Age to set off human life at its best, to reconcile men to its troublous course. If no man can be called happy till his death, they who are nearest the final goal and still cheerful and contented best deserve the epithet. Their serenity illuminates the whole backward path. The griefs, cares, and perplexities of life lose some of their bitterness when we see the bitterness outlived. There are pleasures which years cannot extinguish. As the active business of life recedes from the failing hand we see these pleasures assume a larger and more satisfying aspect. The beneficent habit of industry, the activity which leads up to and accompanies most extreme old age, finds new work for itself, and often assumes a poetical form. A man of ninety-two, whose life had been passed in an incredible round of toil of mind and body, when labour was no longer possible, made it a business to survey the stars every night. His tottering steps' last office was duly to lead him to the open air, where he could "examine the heavens"; his last words, "How clear the moon shines to-night!" One great lesson of old age to us all is, that if we would live long and keep our powers, we must use them. All noted examples of old age are associated with exercise of some kind, either of body or of brain, and as being *noted* chiefly of brain. Indolence seems never to live long. To be sure, the old Cumberland beggar's exercise—he who fulfils the test of real old age, that to the current memory he always seemed old—

"Him from my childhood have I known, and then
He was so old, he seems not older now,"

does not constitute him an example of sustained mental effort, but he "travels on," and has travelled as long as the poet can remember him; and it was this ceaseless course which kept him alive. Old Elspeth in the '*Antiquary*' is an unprofitable instance of brain-work, but what an image of ceaseless busy memory she presents, of a mind for ever in pursuit! All experience and observation present examples to the point. Looking upon the leaders in political life, it sometimes seems that mankind has gained ten years of working power since the Psalmist numbered the days of our age. And what work is harder! What taxes the powers with stronger tension! It is not this taxing of the faculties which tries men: where the power exists it demands exercise, and frets the system if left unemployed. What does wear out the brain and shortens life is harass, which torments the mind much more through our private interests and affections than through great public responsibilities. We doubt if a distressed life is ever a very long one. Either the lot is free from such conflicts, or the temperament is too calm and equable to be violently tossed by them.

As the average age of woman exceeds that of man, our examples of clever distinguished old ladies would probably outnumber our list of lawyers and statesmen, though the eyes of all the world are not upon them in the same way. What a bevy of witty, learned, charming old ladies depart this scene together at the

close of Miss Berry's Memoirs. She in her ninetieth year, her sister Agnes a year younger, Joanna Baillie eighty-nine, Lady Charlotte Lindsay, a contemporary of the set, all maintaining their powers to the last; their interests, letters, and conversation constituting them cherished members of a brilliant society.

Mary Somerville is a still later and more signal example of the life-sustaining power of brain-work. An acquaintance has recorded his impressions of her on her ninetieth birthday,¹ when he visited her at Naples in 1870. In the spacious drawing-room of a great palazzo he found her with two ladies; herself sitting watchful and dignified in a low arm-chair. Her ninety years had withered her frame and impaired her hearing, but her interest in current events was still keen. "She had foreseen the war fifty years before at the Restoration." She was military and commiserating, critic and woman by turns. You had but to close your eyes and to fancy a clever *modern* English-woman talking; the words and thoughts were as fresh and current as those of the clever young wife of a clever young member of Parliament. But of course she was most interesting when she came to talk of herself.

"'I do not apologise for talking of myself,' she said, 'for it is always good for the young to hear that old age is not so terrible as they fear. My life is a very placid one. I have my coffee early; from eight to twelve I write or read in bed; then I rise and paint in my studio for an hour—that is all I can manage

¹ People's Magazine, February 1873.

now ! The afternoon is my time of rest, then comes dinner time, and after that I sit here and am glad to see any kind friends who may like to visit me.' Then she would explain what was the reading and writing she was engaged upon. She was correcting and adding to the first edition of 'Molecular and Microscopic Science,' —'only putting it in order for my daughter to publish when a second edition is called for after my death. Oh, they are quite competent to do it,' she would say with a smile ; 'I took care they should be much better educated than I was. And I am reading a good deal now—reading Herodotus. I took him down from my shelves the other day—it was the first time I had tried to read Greek for fifty years—to see if I had forgotten the character. To my delight I found I could read and understand him quite easily. What a charming writer Herodotus is !' All this was without the slightest pedantry—the utterance of a perfectly natural, simple mind, that dwelt upon subjects which interested it when they saw that they interested its neighbour."

We have dwelt upon the bright side of the picture—not often seen, perhaps, but where temper, intellect, and health combine, to be found within each reader's experience. Rarely among the poor does extreme old age descend with so indulgent an aspect. The very old can scarcely be other than objects of unmixed pity when the material necessities of life need labour for their supply. The loss of authority, the dread of dependence, the spectre of the workhouse ! natural cheerfulness is not strong enough to encounter these terrors, unaided by numbed faculties on the one hand, or deep religious faith on the other. Acting upon a proud nature, accustomed to domineer in the days of its strength, and, in fact, intellectually superior, they sometimes produce very tragical effects. Old age and helplessness, in such a case, will harden into misanthropy, and deliberately die of want and starvation

rather than accept prolonged life on intolerable terms. Swift says that dignity, high station, or great riches are in some sort necessary to old men, in order to keep the younger at a distance, who are otherwise apt to insult them on the score of age. Certainly independence is desirable in a very particular sense ; but the happiest old age seems to be found where competence is enjoyed apart from rank and state. And what a deep pathos attends the death of the very old —what a link with the past is snapped—how much knowledge is irrecoverably lost to the world !

To lament over human life as a failure, to sum up its transient pleasures, sorrows, losses, as the whole that is worth dwelling upon, is so general a tone that it seems taking a low line to give weight to compensations ; but surely the blessings of Providence which spread over the whole of existence are designed to dignify every part. Youth has many friends and all the world for admirers, and responds so well to ideal treatment that the artist may well lavish his fairest colours upon it. But if a man will appeal to his own experience, and ask himself from whom he has derived the greatest benefits, we believe he will find that he owes his snuggest comfort, his most genial companionship, his highest converse, his warmest sympathy, to that age which is set down as hard and worldly because it is necessarily busy with the world's material things, but which in fact is naturally more accessible than youth from the knowledge that the more passionate and exciting passages of life are over,

and that a stage of life is reached in which its romance and many of its most lively interests can only be tasted through sympathies.

We let our years slip through our fingers like water. Of young and old alike this is too often true. It is no part of our aim to intrude on the preacher's office; we have confined ourselves to the social aspect of the question—age as viewed by a man's self and those about him. There are deep and solemn thoughts peculiar to every stage. Surely the way to let no period slip by us unheeded is to study the duties and privileges of each with an impartial judgment and a thankful heart.

T E M P E R.

THERE seems a peculiar tendency in men to change the meaning or to abandon the use of words by which they express the more intimate relations and emotions, the events that happen to us all, or the temperament and disposition that characterises each one of us. It matters not how fit the word is for its work, it must go when its time comes. Men no longer wed but marry ; we give up sweetheart to the vulgar without an equivalent ; and that fine word humour has so changed its meaning, that when Addison says—"No man ought to be tolerated in an habitual humour by any who do not wait on him for bread"—the modern reader has to consider before he apprehends his exact meaning. The vocabulary of one generation does not suit the needs of the next. Sometimes we amplify and sometimes we condense. But however the pen expresses itself, it inscribes at the same time a date to be detected by posterity. Through what a quaint series of archaisms does

Anthony Wood endeavour to give variety to the announcement of death, as one after another he closes his biographical record; seeking to adapt it to the worth and character of each. The saint surrenders up his pious soul, the player makes his last exit, a clown did usher Davenant to his grave; one concludes his last day, another pays his last debt, another gives up the ghost, another yields to nature. To be born is to receive his first breath; to die, to surrender up his last,—and so on. Modern biographers, seeing that one event happens to all, give up the hope of exciting new reflections in the reader, and resign themselves to the bare record, “he died.” Thus the ingenuities of composition exercise themselves by turns in different fields. We are simple where our predecessors were moral and didactic.

But it is in what concerns the inner man that we note more particularly this law of change. The complexities of the subject, the difficulties of analysis, the perversions of satire and irony, all tend to it. The term that satisfies one age fails to say what the next wants to have said. What breadth, nobleness, and benignity, for instance, our ancestors saw in the quality good-nature! but humanity was not amiable enough to allow of its continuance in this first meaning. It had lost it in Dryden’s time, who “would fain bring back good-nature to its original signification of virtue,” though the change he notices is rather an adulteration than actual change, an excellence degraded into an easiness of nature. The change in the

word which heads our subject is more fundamental. Temper, familiarly used, may be said to have turned round in its meaning within the last two or three hundred years. It used to be the atmosphere of the soul, applied generally in a favourable sense. “Restore yourselves unto your tempers,” writes Ben Jonson. Nowadays when a man is in a temper, if we dare, we bid him come out of it. True, to lose temper is still to lose serenity—“keep your temper” is still familiar counsel: we so far hold to the old turn of phrase; but now to *have* temper is to be disturbed and disturbing. But here again we condense where our forefathers amplified. By what various epithets they indicated stormy, disordered, irascible natures! They were peevish, froward, sour, petulant, waspish, angry, fuming, shrewd. They had their masculine and feminine adjectives. The men were choleric, the women were curst. The men raged, the women had their glouting humours, fits, and vapours; they were scolds, they were jades, they were shrews and vixens. For all this, whether in man or woman, we substitute, in common parlance, one generic term, temper as a possession, ill temper as its manifestation. The affix “bad” or “ill”—a bad temper, ill-tempered—is so modern, that we should scarcely find it in any book more than a hundred years old; sweet temper occurring earlier than the reverse. We say common parlance, for no doubt it was its introduction into common use which caused the change of meaning. Now, *Nature* with the vulgar

has never been much used in a personal sense. With them it is the Nature of things or of work, not of man. The countryman understood the *nature* of all farm-labour ; good food loses its *nature* under adverse condition. The cynicism of would-be wit and no vulgar handling, transposed good-nature in man into a vapid quality. But with *temper* it is different. So soon as it slipped into conversational use it altered its meaning by a sort of necessity ; for the common run of people think of nothing in the abstract, and temper does not come under consideration at all with the vulgar but as a thing disturbed and causing disturbance. "Keep your temper," says mild Mrs Lirriper to her fiery subordinate, applying the term here in its primitive sense. "I'll show them the sort of temper I keep," is the virago's reply. "All of us has our tempers," says the maid of her fellow-servants ; "but I think his is the worst." "What sort of temper ?" asks a lady. "Ma'am, she hasn't one," is the favourable rejoinder. We have all found that, however curious the distinctions between one form of diseased temper and another, the troublesome and vexatious qualities of one and all have a common resemblance. They all make themselves unpleasantly felt, all disturb our peace, all suggest the same precautions, all arouse, though in various degrees, a kindred irritation. Whether the man is sullen or snappish, crabbed or snarling, fretful or furious, it is equally wisdom to let the sleeping dog lie so long as sleep it will.

However, having settled for mutual convenience upon a generic term, we cannot for a moment rest in it. There are infinite varieties of bad temper, as well as shades and degrees of the same. Yet we may first define the three distinctions of temper in its primary meaning, with relation to irascibility. An ordinary temper is quiet and so far good as long as it is not provoked ; a bad temper is the aggressor ; a sweet temper can agree with a bad one through its own benignity. We should be careful how we call even the aggressive temper a bad one. It may arise from such purely physical causes as to be beyond the power of complete control ; but it cannot exist without our being alive to it. It may be so slight an inconvenience as merely to ruffle the surface of social intercourse, and to amuse while it ruffles, or it may disturb social and domestic life to its very depths—it may be food for gentle satire or it may embitter life ; but wherever it exists it is perceived, or at least felt. Anything deserving to be defined as “a temper” at all, is a presence not to be forgotten by those within its influence—a fact, though it may not be recognised by its right name. That only should be called a bad temper which needs to be calculated upon and warded against at every turn—which constitutes a recognised trial in those near enough to be subject to it—which leads those acquainted with it to ask first at every turn of affairs how Mr M—— will take it ? what Mrs N—— will say to it ? But every aggressive temper, compatible as it is with a thousand

excellent and charming qualities, lays itself open to certain tests. Take, for example, in any family circle, the member who has first to be considered in any plan or arrangement—apart, we mean, from natural recognised claims,—the one whom it is all-important to please because he is certain to make it unpleasantly apparent that he is not pleased—that one has the temper; though very likely the judgment would surprise himself and be excepted against by his friends, for it requires two in this state of the disorder to bring it to a head; and so long as the temper acts unconsciously and is unconsciously yielded to, it is bearable. The downward step from this stage is where the temper is brought to play as an engine—where the man makes himself “nasty” and knows it; for here is deliberate aggression which no merely ordinary temper can stand unmoved. Every degree of bad temper, even the slightest, can only relieve itself through the suffering of others. The suffering, designed whether consciously or not, may be slight—mere uneasiness; but that uneasiness is the object aimed at. The sullen look when others are gay is meant to check that gaiety. The frown or the scowl grows darker until it has effected its purpose. Somebody must share the gloom before it will pass away.

Happy the man who can honestly clear himself of all knowledge of this sour condition! Without being ill-tempered, most people have their periods of bad temper. We may all have our turns of acting *bête noire*, though our test applies to those of whom the

performance is expected—to whom it comes most naturally. If we, too, share a temper of this sort, it is well that we should face it, under whatever aspect. It may be a temper that stands in the way of others' independence of action, and innocent enjoyment ; instigated by jealousy, it may interfere with friendships and intimacies ; stimulated by obtrusiveness, it may exact a share in every interest or excitement ; spurred by contradiction, it may quench the flow of thought and opinion ; set on by egoism, it may allow no kindnesses, liberalities, affections it does not share ; prompted by bile or indigestion, it may refuse to suffer alone, exacting a tribute of discomfort from all within reach of the evil influence. So blind is ill temper that any one of these states may be the habit of the mind without a suspicion of the fact. Few people would be recognised kill-joys if they knew it. Certain it is that no study of temper in the abstract should be pursued without self-study and reference to conscience. The two pursuits have not as much in common as they seem ; and ill temper may refine upon ill temper, analyse, depict with telling effect, without once consulting the inner consciousness.

No temper should be condemned as bad that is not set going by selfish considerations. Men may be vehement and passionate to any excess, on public grounds if no personal motive mixes itself with their heat, without exciting, even in those unaccustomed to look for motives, the repugnance that bad temper must always excite. The distinction is felt before it

is seen. However, it is rare to find anger without this alloy ; the man in a passion is a city without gates and bars, and self very readily steps in where the spirit is off its guard. Still a man full of general interests, apt to throw himself into great questions with which he has no other personal concern than as they stir his deeper nature, may commit even outrages of temper under provocation, without earning or meriting the epithet ill-tempered ; for a bad temper narrows and confines the spirit — indulged, it imprisons it within the circle of personal claims, consequence, rights, pretensions, predominance, and puts the ego foremost, however seemingly remote from the cause of irritation : and these claims must in fairness be *unreasonable* claims ; for we have as much right to be angry at real injustice or wrong towards ourselves as at that of which others are the victims.

Men are indulgent to the excesses of fire and impulse. Indeed the merely impersonal disposition that lives out of self, and is without passion of any kind, is scarcely fit for social intercourse. We are not interested in any person not to be moved by sense of wrongs to at least a spurt of anger ; and, in fact, the person without a spirit that can be roused, without the temptation to fire up at injury and injustice towards himself or others, is either broken-spirited by weight of ill-usage, or born lethargic, phlegmatic, passive, or merely frivolous and wanting in self-respect. Of the crushed spirit, which is past, and perhaps above, being stirred to any heat of indignation, Silvio Pellico is an

instance, as well in the concluding tone of his pathetic narrative of suffering as in his later writings : and also many a wife, whose tale of wrong, from the bullying temper of a tyrant husband, can only be read in the blank resignation of an overtired patience, telling upon movement, attitude, expression. "She looks as if she had been put upon all her life," is the colloquial mode of accounting for this melancholy prostration. God tries His servants with the sharp instrument of human cruelty ; some indignation at evil must and should stir the heart, so long as its mechanism remains in healthy working condition, till the tension of a protracted, severely tasked patience wears out the spring,—which it does after a time, when hopelessly exposed to the tyranny either of system and law, or, what is worse, a cruel temper.

But this word Spirit has gone through as many changes as the cognate terms under discussion. To be spiritless is to be born below or beyond, or to have outlived, common sympathy ; to *have* a spirit is often a euphemism for temper of the more violent and irrepressible kind. Persons will boast of a spirit who suppose themselves owners of a temper not worse, at least, than the average. The indulgent husband whose wife keeps him in hot water with all his old friends, and prevents his making new ones, will own, in confidence, that his wife has a spirit, while he still would not breathe the word temper even to the reeds : though the time must surely come when the admission will be made and the epithet applied in its fullest force.

There is indeed so much to provoke us all, in the turn things are apt to take in this world, that temper, until we have seriously suffered from it, rather stimulates sympathy than destroys it. Nobody is liked the worse for occasionally showing other people that he has a temper; we take it as a vindication and excuse for our own lapses in kind. He is more one of us. Moreover, we are tolerant of temper as of a defect for which no one is wholly responsible. People are born of a certain composition—what the Italians call *pasta*. There is something in the passionate or sullen temper that now and then takes the reins out of the hands of reason—will he, nill he. Just as no self-discipline or training will impart a sweet temper, which is a gift of Nature, “not an acquired but a natural excellence,”—so no conquest over temper can be so complete as to blot out every indication or possibility of relapse; it can be brought under, but not changed to its contrary. The victim of it is interesting as *being* a victim of some adverse power. There is always this theory of possession, of the man being got hold of by something that is not himself. When passion arrives at a certain stage, he is “driven by the furies,” no longer a free agent. But besides this, temper in others has its attractive side to strong wills, as a thing they can subdue. The high repute of Katharine’s temper was a positive attraction to Petruchio; he longed to try his hand on it. He knew he should have the best in the encounter—and the strong like to try their strength. But women are the real tolerators—more than tolera-

tors, patrons—of ill temper. Nothing but experience will teach them fear. The indulged daughter is attracted by indications of temper in her lover. Women are born managers, and the love of management wants something to manage. It is part of the craving for sovereignty which Chaucer attributes to the sex. We may regard it as a provision of Nature in favour of the passionate and moody that they can always find some woman willing to take them in hand ; believing that it only needs judicious treatment to tame the tiger into a domestic animal, and that hers is the gift and the mission. She is so far supported in her theory that the worst tempers are generally amenable to some particular influence. The violent woman's little daughter talks fearlessly of " mamma in one of her tantrums," they do not touch her : the man who is a lion in his house, and frantic among his servants, never commits himself to some favourite child, or holds the demon in check in his intercourse with his wife, who, having won him, knows how to keep him, by some rare union of courage and sweetness—by never showing herself afraid, never trembling before him. Why may not *she* be like this wife, and in her turn subdue a temper to her purposes. Sometimes it answers even where the task is deliberately undertaken, but only where the temper belongs to a character of many sides. There are men whose only domestic side is ill-humour, who only soften to persuasions from without, whose home temper, from mere habit, is an abiding presence, a shadow that never

gives place to the sun—the moral barometer's fluctuations ranging only from rain to storm. Women of the lower class are the bitterest sufferers from this reliance on their taming powers, as they are the most reckless in testing them. We have known a gentle creature with whom it must have constituted the sole motive. Tied to an ill-tempered brute, and sadly reflecting in after-years on how it came about, she could safely say it was not his looks that misled her; for she recalled her remonstrances to her good easy first husband, at his having such an acquaintance—“he is that *fou'* [foul] and that shabby that *I* should be ashamed to be seen speaking to him.” And yet in time she married him, and from henceforth was his slave, with no other thanks than growls and curses hurled at her by day, and muttered in his sleep; for “he never turned in bed without an oath.”

The worst victims of this hallucination have not even the compensation of those outbursts of penitence which are supposed to follow transports of rage, and which, while love lasts, are so touching and so dear; for the people who cast a permanent gloom around them don't seem to know it. The man of merely brutal temper is probably not given to scrutiny of any kind, any more than a raging bull or a vicious mule. Happy they whose own temper is not tried or exasperated by rasping contact with one of these social monsters, by no means confined to the poor, though the scandals they cause are most public where life altogether has fewest concealments. It needs a

very fine nature not to be narrowed and soured under such contact, even where it is borne patiently and wisely. A daughter or wife so circumstanced sees everything through a distempered medium. Nothing can be viewed on its own merits, but primarily on its bearings with the predominant influence—the most cramping of all conditions outside the inner self. It is few indeed who can endure such bondage, though they seem to bear it well, without suffering, not only in feeling, but in character, and sinking below the level to which happiness and intercourse with just and gentle natures would have raised them.

Considering what a power ill-temper is in the world,—what engines of discomfort are even its slighter exhibitions, what a misery its serious outbreaks, and yet how gingerly it has to be touched; how careful it behoves us to be against attributing it to those with whom we have close personal contact; how material to our interests to preserve our own composure by avoiding collisions; how indispensable it is in polite society to shut our eyes to it; how incumbent on us as Christians to be lenient where it cannot be ignored, and to put favourable constructions, so long as they are possible,—it is no wonder that ill-temper plays a great part in abstract speculation, where our tongues and thoughts have fair play; and a still greater in works of imagination, in whatever exhibits the passions and emotions in action. It is in this field alone that the world can avenge itself on ill-humour, at once with charity and dignity. Not

of course that we need this impersonal field for the expression of our opinion,—it exhales against the disturbers of our serenity at every safe opportunity: nothing is so interesting as the temper of our friends and acquaintance, nothing elicits and quickens our critical faculty so keenly. It is impossible for ordinary human nature to endure the caprices and injuries of ill-temper without some vent. No people get their deserts more surely, from some quarter or another, than the passionate or the peevish. But in discussing temper on the basis of immediate experience, some element of humiliation will qualify our tone of superiority. We have been subservient, it may be, on the purest motives of prudence or patience; but a thorough fit of ill-temper is always the head, and those subject to it the tail. In the delineation of temper all this is reversed. A culprit is arraigned before us and we are the calm, dispassionate judges—our experience merely a witness to the truth of the picture. We are in a different atmosphere altogether from the personal one. It is from no sense of personal wrongs, from no rough experiences, that the masterly painter of the humours and passions of mankind derives his knowledge of their workings. All great artists in this field are observers rather than actors. It is not their own sufferings which inspire them, or the sufferings must be at least remote, and only severe enough to assist imagination in its perception. It is sympathy, not experience. The man sitting down under the im-

mediate pressure of indignation to describe a passion would make rude work of it, and omit all the delicate touches. We should not know who was right and who wrong; there would be a demand for the other side of the story. The best painters of human nature in this line at least, have, as far as their biographies are to be trusted, had easy tempers, subjected to no harsh trials. Under their handling we are let into the mechanism of ill-temper,—its weak side. It is a power while we are subject to it; when we see it depicted we see it a weakness and flaw. The giant before whom the reader has trembled now makes him sport; the fretfulness which has vexed his soul now affords him an exquisite diversion. It is an exposure; but if we once suspected in the author any spirit of revenge, any indulgence of a grudge, the truth of the picture would fall under suspicion. We doubt if any one can properly appreciate the shades of imperfect ungoverned temper rendered by a fine hand, without time for experience. What seems fancy to the young reader grows into truth as his knowledge of men enlarges. Not, as we say, that the picture is a portrait —no mere reproduction stands well in a work of art—but he recognises an artist sure of his ground: given a certain temper, circumstances would produce such and such evidences of it.

In touching upon the varieties of imperfect temper, we must, then, seek our illustrations mainly from the pages of fiction. That of real life is obviously closed to us, except as we read it in irresponsible gossiping

anecdote or biography. And here a double reason prevents our finding much to our purpose. The biographer is unwilling to lower his subject in the eyes of his reader, and a passion set down in black and white has generally this consequence; and if he seeks to be true to the utmost, the materials for such truth are so evanescent that after a few years he may indeed know and therefore tell us that his subject was of a stormy or peevish temperament—this may still be notorious—but all the proofs of it may have vanished out of the world. Boswell, whose observation of human nature almost amounted to genius, gives Johnson in a passion with fine effect; but even he only succeeds by an instant record, and the self-sacrifice of a superhuman candour.

Johnson had that strong sense of personality which belongs to irritable temper. He would fly out on abstract questions, because he could not see anything without self-reference. “I can love all mankind,” says he, “except an American;”—here was a relation established, and then “his inflammable corruption bursting into horrid fire, he called them rascals, robbers, pirates;” and on Miss Seward putting in a word of mild reproof, “he roared out another tremendous volley which one might fancy could be heard across the Atlantic.” No caricature of comedy represents passion in more lively uncontrol than in the scene where his short-sightedness is alluded to. He and Dr Percy were discussing Pennant on Scotch scenery.

"*Johnson*. I think he describes very well.

Percy. I travelled after him.

Johnson. And I travelled after him.

Percy. But, my good friend, you are short-sighted, and do not see so well as I do.

I wondered at Dr Percy venturing thus. Dr Johnson said nothing at the time, but inflammable particles were collecting for a cloud to burst. In a while Dr Percy said something more in disparagement of Pennant.

Johnson. This is the resentment of a narrow mind, because he did not find everything in Northumberland.

Percy (*feeling the stroke*). Sir, you may be as rude as you please.

Johnson. Hold, sir ! Don't talk of rudeness ; remember, sir, you told me (*puffing hard with passion struggling for a vent*) I was short-sighted. We have done with civility. We are to be as rude as we please.

Percy. Upon my honour, sir, I did not mean to be uncivil.

Johnson. I cannot say so, sir ; for I did mean to be uncivil, thinking you had been uncivil."

We must give the sequel, as illustrating a temper placable as well as soon angry.

"Dr Percy rose, ran up to him, and taking him by the hand, assured him affectionately that his meaning had been misunderstood. Upon which a reconciliation instantly took place.

Johnson. My dear sir, I am willing you shall hang Pennant."

Petulant anger is so far ungenerous that it naturally wreaks itself on the safest object. Boswell not being easily offended was not seldom a victim. Once he ventured to interpose a word for the Americans, and to regret his friend's prejudice. Johnson said nothing, but the cloud was charged with sulphurous vapour which was afterwards to burst in thunder ; for presently the conversation turning on a gentleman who

was running out his fortune in London, Boswell said :—

“We must get him out of it. All his friends must quarrel with him, and that will soon drive him away.

Johnson. Nay, sir, we'll send *you* to him. If your company does not drive a man out of his house, nothing will.

This was a horrible shock for which there was no visible cause. I afterwards asked him why he had said so harsh a thing.

Johnson. Because, sir, you made me angry about the Americans.

Boswell. But why did you not take your revenge directly ?

Johnson (smiling). Because, sir, I had nothing ready. A man cannot strike till he has his weapons.

This was a candid and pleasant confession.”

Dr Johnson is also an example of that quality conspicuous in “temper”—a lively sense of what is due to self. The petulant person constantly says and does disagreeable things, because he owes it to himself to take notice of certain failures of such duty in others. Beauclerc once sure of his ground ended a dispute with the hazardous remark, “This is what you don’t know, and I do.” Johnson owed it to himself—in the presence of strangers—to have the last word: so—

“ After some minutes, during which dinner and the glass went on cheerfully, he suddenly asks Mr Beauclerc, ‘How came you to talk so petulantly to me, “This is what you don’t know, but what I know”? One thing *I* know which you don’t seem to know, that you are very uncivil.’ And one Hackman’s violent temper coming on the *tapis* he improves the occasion : ‘It was his duty to *command* his temper as my friend Mr Beauclerc should have commanded his some time ago.’

Beauclerc. I should learn of you, sir.

Johnson. Sir, you have given *me* opportunities of learning when I have been in *your* company.”

A temper indulged seldom confines itself to one mode. All the terms—Petulant, Angry, Peevish, Fretful, Impetuous, Irritable, are applied to Johnson's "unhappy temper." Gigantic in everything, his temper was of the same mould. It is no slight testimony to his character and genius, to his innate kindness of nature, that, being what it was, he does not live in men's minds associated with that one idea—that we can regard his temper as an accident, the effect of disease, not as the man himself; and a still greater testimony to the worth of his heart that he could keep his friends and yet treat them in the way he did when the fit was on him. For with more ordinary friendships it is as Cowper writes,—

"A fretful temper will divide
The closest knot that may be tied,
By ceaseless sharp corrosion ;
A temper passionate and fierce
May suddenly your joys disperse
At one immense explosion."

The obvious tendency of temper is to alienate. The pain inflicted by its stings and outrages, however we may nerve ourselves to bear it, by degrees possesses the feelings and imagination to the exclusion of all other considerations. Our judgment appreciates the counterbalancing excellences; but the person whose frequent mood it is to give pain—and it is the one object of all manifestations of temper to do so—separates himself from our sympathies, when he has done it once too often, by a gap not easily bridged over.

Temper in some people does not need a personal object for its indulgence ; and in this case, though we don't like him the better for it, we put up with the annoyance in a more tolerant spirit. The grumbler is of this type, who can't be put out of his way without making others uncomfortable, but does not make this his first object. The times, as they affect him, are out of joint, and he must have his fling at them. Miss Austen, whose forte is delicate touches, depicts this temper most felicitously in John Knightly, Emma's brother-in-law—clever, domestic, respectable, not so often unreasonably cross as to deserve the reproach of being ill-tempered, but capable of being sometimes out of humour, and “whose feelings must always be of great importance to his companions.” These feelings were injured by having to go to a dinner-party one winter's day. His temper exhales in general principles, in a strain very familiar to many of us :—

“A man must have a very good opinion of himself when he asks people to leave their own fireside and encounter such a day as this, for the sake of coming to see him. He must think himself a most agreeable fellow. I could not do such a thing. It is the greatest absurdity—actually snowing at this moment ! The folly of not allowing people to be comfortable at home ; and the folly of people's not staying at home comfortably when they can ! If we were obliged to go out such an evening as this, by any call of duty or business, what a hardship we should deem it ; —and here we are, probably with rather thinner clothing than usual, setting forward voluntarily, without excuse, in defiance of the voice of nature, which tells man, in everything given to his view or his feelings, to stay at home himself and keep all under shelter that he can ;—here are we setting forward to spend five dull hours in another man's house, with nothing to say or hear

that was not said and heard yesterday, and may not be said and heard again to-morrow. Going in dismal weather, to return probably in worse. Four horses and four servants taken out for nothing but to convey five idle, shivering creatures into colder rooms and worse company than they might have had at home."

But grumbling indulged, rarely ends without the craving for revenge on something more tangible than society. By the end of the evening this eloquent and reasoning grumbler finds a victim in poor helpless, nervous Mr Woodhouse, whose temperament is too familiar to the reader for further definition. "This will prove a spirited beginning for your winter engagements, sir," he cries in inhuman banter. "I admired your resolution very much in venturing out on such weather, for of course you saw there would be snow very soon. I admired your spirit; and I daresay we shall get home very well. We are two carriages; if *one* is blown over in the bleak part of the common field, there will be the other at hand. I daresay we shall all be safe at home before midnight." Grumblers, as a rule, do not need any other form of sympathy than respectful attention. They do not care to wake the spirit in others. In this they differ from the fretful temperament, which desires to irritate, and resents passive meekness. Lisbeth in 'Adam Bede,' "at once patient and complaining, self-renouncing and exacting," whose wail was to Adam the most irritating of all sounds, resents in her son Seth the immovable sweetness of his temper. "Thee was allays like a bag o' meal that can ne'er be bruised." She longed for something to fret against, to hurt in its resistance, to

provoke to response in kind ; therefore she loved Adam best, who would give a sharp answer, and illustrate the author's observation that " we are apt to be kinder to the brutes that love us than the women that love us. Is it that the brutes are dumb ? " and yet fretfulness is timid and cowardly, and presumes on tolerance and forbearance. Perhaps all active forms of temper that exercise themselves in devising provocations act on the expectation of an answer in kind—they wish to irritate, not merely to crush into trembling subservience. The sullen temper can nourish itself in silence—waiting to be roused. There is a sort of temper that barks out its ill-humour, and vents itself after fits of moody silence in short sharp insults and injuries, relapsing into sullenness again. We should call this the least enjoyable ill-temper to its possessor, except that Charles Lamb has recorded the pleasures of a sulky fit in a way to touch every one's conscience. Sullenness is the familiar demon that has spoiled many a seeming prosperity. Self-love and morosity, says the ancient moralist, together with luxury and effeminity, breed *long fits* of anger, which gather in the soul like a swarm of wasps. In its passive state, on the defensive, it is well rendered in the play. Sullen, after being tipsy overnight, enters on the scene.

" *Sullen*. My head aches consumedly.

Mrs Sullen. Will you be pleased, my dear, to drink tea with us this morning ? It may do your head good.

Sullen. No.

Dorinda. Coffee, brother ?

Sullen. Pshaw !

Mrs Sullen. Will you please to dress and go to church with me ? The air may help you.

Sullen. Scrub !

Enter SCRUB.

Scrub. Sir ?

Sullen. What day of the week is this ?

Scrub. Sunday, an't please your worship.

Sullen. Sunday ! bring me a dram ; and, d'ye hear, set out the venison pasty and a tankard of strong beer upon the hall table : I'll go to breakfast.

Dorinda. Stay, stay, brother ! you shan't go off so ; you were very naughty last night, and must make your wife reparation. Come, come, brother, won't you ask pardon ?

Sullen. For what ?

Dorinda. For being drunk last night.

Sullen. I can afford it, can't I ?

Mrs Sullen. But I can't, sir.

Sullen. Then you may let it alone.

Mrs Sullen. But I must tell you, sir, that this is not to be borne.

Sullen. I'm glad on't.

Mrs Sullen. What is the reason, sir, that you treat me thus inhumanly ?

Sullen. Scrub.

Scrub. Sir ?

Sullen. Get things ready to shave my head.

[*Exit.*"]

This, we suspect, is the only temper which has no attractions to the female bosom,—it is chronic, and independent of provocations. It rouses to the highest pitch the temper exposed to it, but in its turn is like Lisbeth's bag of meal, when the weaker impetuous spirit hurls itself against it. More than its match in brutality, Mr Anthony Trollope has drawn a *violent* temper, which he represents as exercising a fascination on woman. The readers of his excellent novel, ‘Can you

Forgive Her ?'—than which fiction possesses few tales more readable—will recall George Vavasor, who has power to make his heroine jilt her respectable lover, through the mere instrumentality of selfishness and ill-temper, a temper that paints itself on a huge cicatrice on his cheek, turning it red like a newly-cut gash whenever passion is roused. The character is energetically drawn, and would be powerful and tragic but for a certain sense of amusement evident in the genial author at his own ogre-like creation. The secret satisfaction Vavasor finds in making calculations how to commit murder without detection, are no doubt natural ; but when the City refused to discount Alice's paper, and he makes his calculations about murdering it—"Could not a river of strychnine be turned on round the Exchange about luncheon-time ?" we see Mr Trollope's imagination revolts from horrors, and takes refuge in the burlesque, carrying the reader with him, who, in the midst of a terrible string of curses, finds himself recalling the provincial lady's report of her sporting friend who had been out *cursing* all the morning. And true enough, violent temper is ridiculous, only its terrors will not allow those who suffer from it to see and relish its real grotesqueness. It is when we survey it, caged through the secure bars of print, with some master-student of the profession for showman, that we can appreciate its absurd side. Shakespeare's old Duke of York bawling for his boots is amusing to the reader, but terrible to his old Duchess and the son he resolves to denounce. Even

Lear's passion, the grandest and most eloquent that man has painted, creates a smile as with growing rage he reverts to the indignity put on his follower—"But who put my man i' the stocks?" But it is not only the impotence of anger which strikes the mere observer with patronising amusement. He must be a dull fellow indeed who has not something clever to say when in a passion. If a man has any wit in him, perfect unrestraint brings it out; hence comedy and farce depend much upon temper for their liveliest scenes. Passion makes a man unaffected. Nobody is more himself than when he loses himself. Sheridan makes all his people too witty for nature; but we acknowledge our kindred with Sir Anthony in a rage rather than with Acres in cool blood: his new system of oaths is beyond us, but we can at least recall occasions when we felt it easy to speak our minds, when passion gave us the feeling of something more like eloquence than we had known before, and a vocabulary became ours that in our passive moments we have sought after in vain. How readily his periods flow, how expansive his ideas!—"Take care: the patience of a saint may be overcome at last! but mark, I give you six hours and a half to consider of this; if then you agree, without any condition, to do everything on earth that I choose, why, I may in time forgive you—if not, don't enter the same hemisphere with me! don't dare to breath the same air, or use the same light with me, but get an atmosphere and a sun of your own! I'll strip you of your commission; I'll

lodge a five-and-threepence in the hands of trustees, and you shall live on the interest; I'll disown you. I'll disinherit you, and hang me if I ever call you Jack again!" Nor need we consider his reference to sun and atmosphere as beyond the stretch of our imagination, if the rage be but high enough pitched. This earth seems a little spot to a man in a passion; he inevitably looks below or beyond it. "Nothing," writes Sydney Smith, "can exceed the fury of the Whigs (on being thrown out); they mean not only to change everything upon the earth, but to alter the tides, to suspend the principles of gravitation and vegetation, and to tear down the solar system."

But we have wandered into the heroics of our subject, where our experience has to strengthen itself with borrowed knowledge. Let us return to the domestic home-fireside view—to the exhibitions of temper that tease or fret without making *us* altogether miserable, or those who allow themselves in ill-humour, monsters. Take, for example, the carping temper—the fretfulness that wears itself and those about it, yet never grows into passion, or loses self-control beyond its first stage; the dislike to acquiescence in anything, the desire to assert itself and to be prominent. There are good people even, who will make great sacrifices for others, but whose temper renders them enemies to comfort, or what is the same thing, to any comfort they have not a hand in. The eye wanders in search of a grievance or an objection, an inner splenetic humour forbids repose and ruffles the general atmosphere.

This is the melancholy form. There is a sprightly habit of carping quite as irritating, and producing a wider disturbance. A thoroughly irritable temper is consistent with self-control. The wise man afflicted with it knows he cannot trust himself, and is on his guard. But there is a half-control which rushes into the arena of dispute, safe never to transgress conventional civility, but keeping others on thorns, expecting that the threatening storm will surely burst over them. Husbands and wives sometimes treat their friends to scenes of altercation which just stop short of quarrel, like Mr Hotspur and his lady in the '*Spectator*', who in a room full of friends are ever saying something smart to each other, and that but just within rules, so that the whole company stand in the utmost anxiety and suspense for fear of their falling into extremities. The complainant in this case can only wish they hated each other a little more seriously. "If they would only be so discreet as to hate from the very bottom of their hearts, their aversion would be too strong for gibes every moment." It is a wonder that affection can stand the wear of two such tempers in collision. They think it does; but that is questionable love which likes to make its object feel in the wrong, and having the worst of things, though but in an argument or a question of fact.

It is not quite certain that a habit of contradiction as such comes under the description of ill-temper. It is ingrained in some natures, and independent of provocation. Now we generally regard temper in its

relation to others, as we excite its outbursts and experience its inconveniences. But contradiction, though it is a permanent feature, and indulged smiling and in cold blood, is akin to temper in the marked feature of being blind to reason, and therefore needing management and *finesse* in those exposed to it. We have to circumvent it by concealing our bias or the force of our opinion, recognising an inability to agree with others,—an imperious necessity to take the opposite side, such as led Thomas Sudden to stay behind in Westminster Hall when the shake in the roof happened, because the counsel on the other side asserted it was coming down.

We feel disposed to think that women have improved in the matter of commanding their tempers since the great essayist's time. The tempers that used to explode have trained themselves into decency. The sight of a woman of birth and fashion in a down-right passion must at one time have been a common one, or the sex was much maligned by poets and moralists. There must have been some ground in fact for the scene given with so much spirit by Tom Megget, the bachelor friend of henpecked Mr Freeman, when, upon his admonitions, the pretty wife's softness turned so suddenly into rage, and “she threw the scalding tea-kettle on your humble servant,” from thence flying at her husband's periwig—no doubt a very tempting and suggestive object of attack. The arguments used, though irritating to the person immediately addressed, were very likely to prove dissuasives

with fair readers, if any were really disposed to such excesses. "Look you, madam," cries the exasperating Tom, "I have nothing to say in this matter; but you ought to consider you are now past a chicken. This humour, which was well enough in a girl, is insufferable in a woman of your motherly character." Well enough in a *girl*! this explains a good deal. All contemporary literature shows us girls of fifteen in society and encouraged in every childish caprice. *Called* fifteen, at any rate, by their adorers. It is these whom grave Clarissa seems to warn in her fine encomium on good-humour—

"What then remains, but well our powers to use,
And keep good-humour still whate'er we lose?
And, trust me, dear ! good-humour can prevail
When airs and flights and screams and scoldings fail.
Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll ;
Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul."

It must have been an affair of nicety to know when to stop flying into a frenzy. Lady Charlotte Lindsay, in describing Queen Caroline at her trial, certainly does not restrict the period unduly, when she decides that no woman after fifty looks the better for being in a passion. Ungovernable tempers are probably rarer than they used to be in both sexes. For one thing, servants won't put up with what they once did, when kicks and *coups de baton* were atoned for by a pistole or half-a-crown, and when we read of passionate masters whose servants used to throw themselves in their way for the sake of the liberal compensation sure to follow. But not only is the spirit of

the servant class elevated, but fidelity is not the same virtue. There was something in having a master that *was* a master, and knew how to show it, when service was undertaken for life; and room for natural pride in understanding his humours, and knowing how to manage them, and so to protect him from less indulgent scrutiny. When Miss Bremer's fine character "*Ma Chère Mère*" is supposed to be dying, and her devoted maid Elsa is advised to console herself by the thought of her beloved mistress in heaven,—“But what shall I do without her?” is the reply; “and then she must have somebody in heaven to wait upon her, and be at her hand night and day.” “She will be with the angels then, Elsa.” “Ah, dear madam! they could not conform to her temper as I can. They have not lived with her forty years.”

People complain of the growing independence of servants; but, however trying to the housekeeper, it has its moral use. Our present relation with our domestics is a training of temper which the world has wanted till the nineteenth century. Such tempers as Squire Western's, for instance, could hardly grow into what they were without dependants to kick and cuff at will from childhood upwards. Most furious tempers are what they are from having had their sway unchecked from the first—an unresisting somebody to bully. Servants, to judge from books and records, used to be the natural objects for such amenities; but now the most irritable of masters or mistresses, whomsoever else they fly out upon, learn to keep a

civil tongue in their head towards the “tolerable” cook they would be at their wits’ end to replace.

Another training is to be found in games and social amusements, which are growing more and more into a business of life. We give, many of us, a preposterous amount of time to sport; but being an occupation, not simply a relaxation, it has to be made a business of, and subjected to stringent rules. To fail, and lose with a good grace, is a discipline people must learn, old or young, boys or girls, when they are playing every day and all day long. For a girl to be put out at croquet is the worst breeding; and we doubt if such a schoolboy as Howley must have been would now allow himself the loser’s satisfaction recorded by his adversary in the ‘Singleton Letters.’ “I was,” writes Sydney Smith, “at school and college with the Archbishop of Canterbury. Fifty - three years ago he knocked me down with a chess-board for checkmating him, and now he is attempting to take away my patronage. I believe these are the only two acts of violence he ever committed in his life.” It is where life is hard work and play is an eagerly snatched recreation, that the temper is off its guard and irritation shows itself. It seems so hard that the rare holiday should be spoilt—hence Uncle Kimble, who was tolerant and cheerful let what would betide in business hours, became intense and bitter over cards, quarrelled over the odd trick, “shuffling before his adversary’s deal with a glare of suspicion, and turning up a mean trump-card with an air of inexpressible

disgust, as if in a world where such things could happen one might as well enter on a course of reckless profligacy."

Few men have sweet tempers, or hold such as they possess under steady, invariable control, though there are men who, without this sweetness of nature, however much tried, never seem to lose their self-command. No public man can get on long who has not his temper well in hand ; but with the same amount of inflammable particles, men differ very much on the occasions that set fire to them. Some people who are all composure when we might reasonably expect and justly excuse an explosion, will break down into peevishness or passing frenzy on slight provocations. We have known men, quite remarkable for a well-bred serenity, be unreasonably and childishly testy at some transient annoyance of a sort they are not used to. Highly sensitive organisations and intellects kept on the stretch are always irritable. De Quincey, who has no heroes, says that Wordsworth, with all his philosophy, had fits of ill-temper, though the unexampled sweetness of his wife's temper made it impossible to quarrel with her. Nor does the field in which temper exercises itself make much difference. A divine defending his favourite views is as peppery as any layman ; while he flushes, and his eye gleams and scintillates with less consciousness of the spirit that rouses the glare, than the disputant in secular matters—the distinction between zeal and temper being more easily drawn by his opponent or observer than by himself. How often we

read of meetings between religious or philanthropic leaders, looked forward to as a great occasion by their followers, leaving only painful regrets, through some accidental spark falling upon the combustible element in the composition of one or both ! The two great hymn-writers and good Christians, Newton and Toplady, met but once, and but for a few minutes, yet something passed—a trifling jest—which upset Toplady's equanimity, and made his parting words, we are told by the friendly bystander, not very courteous. There are times when men think they do well to be angry, and attribute their display of ill-temper to a holy impulse, while the observer sees only a common pet—exposing itself at the most unsuitable moment—at the failure of their efforts to attract and impress, perhaps to shine. The preacher is particularly subject to the temptation of an angry remonstrance uttered in this spirit. It must be hard to feel your best passages lost through the restlessness of school children or the infectious inattention of the singing gallery; but it seldom answers to allow the chafed spirit its fling. If the interruption becomes unbearable—and in rustic or artisan congregations, where children predominate, it sometimes does so—it is better to seem at a loss for a fitting form of remonstrance, than to have it at the tongue's end. " You boys ain't still at all," said a much-tried curate ; " not at all still, not still at all, you ain't." Much rather would we hear a rebuke in this plaintive, mild, hesitating key—forgetful of self and tender to human infirmities — than the most eloquent denun-

ciation which seemed to confound the words of the preacher with the voice of the Spirit, and addressed the whisperer as a wilful hinderer of the Gospel message, or the clodhopping lout as the destroyer of souls, who but for the distraction caused by his boots might have been saved to all eternity. The parson may be in a passion without knowing it, but not without the congregation being quite alive to it, and the remembrance of a scene outliving every other effect of his discourse.

Thackeray has more than once dwelt on the advantages of a thoroughly bad temper, as securing the best of everything to its possessors, because the people about them know there will be no peace if they don't get it. Certainly a bad wilful temper does often seem favourable to health. The man who has been a Turk all his life lives long to plague all about him. But, on the other hand, the rich man's temper is often a sermon of content to his poorer neighbours. It is a false alchemy that turns his gold into stones. Would they have his money if his sourness and discontent must go along with it?

We may discuss temper with illustrations to advantage, if we do not look too near home for these illustrations, or expend our curiosity in vagrant mental inquiries among our neighbours. One thing is certain: those with whom we pass our lives had best not be subjects of too curious analysis. Nature throws a veil over loving eyes. Until affection is too sorely provoked, it is inexact at definitions, and calls ill-tem-

per a *way*—an accident for which the owner is irresponsible—a physical weakness by which he is the greatest sufferer. When husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, parents and children, call ill-tempers by their right names, the charm of family life is over. But questions we had better not set our judgment to solve about others are very proper concerning ourselves. In fact, the subject is very superficially gone into if we do not slip into personal applications by the way. Ill-temper is malignity while it lasts, and will show signs of its working. Do quarrels gather round us? Are we “fruitful hot water,” living in a commotion? Are people *solicitous* to please us, as though it were not an easy matter to do so—vigilant to see how we take things, forward with apologies, anxious in civilities? Are we bent on giving pleasure *our* way, and vexed when people prefer their own? Do we lose our friends by an exceptional inconstancy on their part? Have we a large stock of grievances? Do we find a great many people irritable, unreasonable, disagreeable, and consider it due to ourselves to let them know our opinion? If conscience gives an affirmative answer, then we may be sure we have a temper that would come under some other denomination than sweet, or good, or even well regulated—a temper to be mended, a task to take in hand.

THE POETS AT PLAY.

IF we were not told it by the poets we should not all of us take so readily for granted that childhood was our happiest time. They are so entirely agreed upon it—however much they differ from one another in other matters—they are so unanimous here, that we accept it as true to a truism. “The heart of childhood is all mirth,” says the ‘Christian Year,’ and its generations of readers have echoed “of course” without asking each of himself if it were indeed so in his individual case. But whether it be true universally or no, it probably is true with the poets; and if so, then common consent derived from a common experience proves one point, that high animal spirits and exceptional vivacity are as essential to the making of a poet as what we call genius. Considering how exceedingly dismal is some of the poetry of the world, and on the other hand how much lively verse lacks every quality of true poetry, this may not be at once accepted. No doubt mere vivacity hurries many people

into mistaking fervour of temperament for inspiration : like Doeg in the satire, who was

“ Too warm on picking work to dwell,
But fagoted his notions as they fell,
And if they rhymed and rattled all was well.”

But the effort of giving harmonious voice to genuine inspiration cannot be sustained without a constitutional elation, a keen enjoyment in the exercise. Rhymes even will only run when the spirits are serene to gaiety. Verse would not be the accepted vehicle for effervescent gaiety if the writer did not show *himself* all alive with the delight of his theme. We do not think of Milton as a man of mirth, but spirits dance and sparkle in “ L’Allegro,” that perennial fount of cheerfulness. No doubt the temperament capable of exaltation to the point of rapture has its relapses, to be made excellent capital of when the cloud is blown over. But the vivacity which helps poets to make verses does not confine itself to this office. It belongs to their nature, often passing the bounds, and through excessive indulgence inducing reaction, but still there and part of themselves so long as they write poetry that deserves the name : though it is now not the common fashion of poets to own to this capacity for jollity as frankly as Prior in his epitaph upon himself—

“ And alone with his friends, lord, how merry was he ! ”

No poetry is written in the dumps, though the remembrance and experience of this gloomy condition are

fertile themes. Thus Coleridge in justifying the egotism of melancholy verse. “Why then write sonnets or monodies? Because they give me pleasure when perhaps nothing else could. After the more violent emotions of sorrow the mind demands amusement, and can find it in employment alone; but full of the late sufferings it can endure no employment not in some measure connected with them.”

Cowper, who might seem an instance against this view, is in reality a strong support of it: so long as he could keep the despondency of insanity at arm’s length, he was the cheerfulest of men. “I never could take a *little* pleasure in anything,” he writes; and his constitutional vivacity was such that, as a boy exulting in his strength and activity, and observing the evenness of his pulse, he began to entertain with no small complacency a notion that perhaps he might never die. He was fully conscious of this vivacity as a stimulus, as when playfully addressing Lady Austen—

“But when a poet takes the pen,
Far more alive than other men,
He feels a gentle tingling come
Down to his finger and his thumb.”

Wordsworth says—

“We poets begin our life in gladness,
But thereof comes in the end satiety and madness.”

With Cowper they ran side by side, the one quite as marked as the other. Pleasure in his work contended with horror. “You remember,” he writes to his friend,

"the undertaker's dance in the Rehearsal, which they perform in crape hat-bands and black cloaks to the tune of Hob and Nob, one of the sprightliest airs in the world. Such is my fiddling and dancing." So long as he could describe his despair in sapphics, and illustrate it in such harmonious stanzas as his "Cast-away," we detect pleasure of some sort in the exercise of his gift, just as we see it in Burns, "still caring, despairing," in his beautiful ode. The two influences are in visible contention. Many poets have the stigma in a lesser degree of depression of spirits; but if they wrote well, it was when the incubus was shaken off. Johnson was, he used to say, miserable by himself, and hated going to bed; but while he could get people to sit up with him he exultingly enjoyed life, and constituted the life and inspiration of the company, which no desponding man can possibly be.

Gray is a genuine instance of a poet without this exceptional vivacity of temperament. He was witty and humorous, but habitually his spirits were in a low key, and the consequence was, no poet who got himself a name ever wrote so little. He had everything of a poet but social instincts and animal spirits; but these deserted him wholly for long periods during which his muse was absolutely tongue-tied. When his friends urged him he answered, "It is indeed for want of spirits that my studies lie among the cathedrals, tombs, and ruins. At present I feel myself able to write a catalogue or to read a peerage-book or

Millar's Gardeners' Dictionary, and am thankful there are such employments in the world."

All this does not prevent the composition of poetry being the hardest work the mind can exercise itself upon : nor does the fact contradict its being the highest form of enjoyment. All vigorous intellectual pleasure needs to be worked up to with effect. We cannot read fine poetry which opens and revives in us a world of keen sensation without a degree of labour from which men too often shrink, preferring lower satisfactions more easily and lazily come by.

The poet, knowing what his real achievements cost him, never withholds them from the world of readers. We need expect no discoveries of this nature in the private records he leaves behind him, unless, like Wordsworth, he deliberately postpones the publication of some cherished manuscript till after his death. But if the gift of verse is a pleasure, it will be played with apart from solemn duty either to the world or the poet's own fame. There will be amusement in adapting it to homely purposes—it will break out at odd times and in odd places, and be characteristic of the man often beyond what he designs for a larger and more critical audience. Whatever a man of genius writes because it pleases him to write it, will tell us something of himself ; though it be but a direction to his printer, an invitation to dinner, or a receipt for the cook. These little spurts of the Muse are quite distinct from the *vers de société* which amateurs turn off, whether easily or laboriously, as the best they can do

—specimens of their powers in an unfamiliar field. They are especially not examples; we were never meant to see them; neither “reader” nor critic was in the poet’s mind, but something closer and more intimate. The most prosaic doggerel of the true poet stands on a different footing from the rhymes of a writer with whom verse is not a natural medium. He would not commit himself to it, but as the indulgence of some impulse which belongs to his poet nature. With his name attached—and this proviso is sometimes necessary, for we have not all the discrimination to detect the master-hand under the homely disguise—we see something that distinguishes it, and stamps his character upon it. An impulse of some kind drives him to express a thought in verse, because it is easier to convey it that way, because it wraps it up so as to allow of a thing being said which might have looked awkward, or bold, or egotistical in prose, or because it best expresses relief from a task or a burden. With the poet, verse is his natural medium for a good deal that the Muse is not generally invoked for; and we like to see how far verse is a language, not a task—to see the “numbers come” on any stimulus. There are poets who never willingly wrote a careless line. Crabbe might have been thought one of these—so careful, so measured, so little egotistical; but we once find him indulging in the repetition of some verses which he acknowledged were not of the most brilliant description, but favourites, because they had amused the irksome restraint of life as chaplain in a great house:—

“ Oh ! had I but a little hut,
 That I might hide my head in ;
 Where never guest might dare molest
 Unwelcome or forbidden.
 I’d take the jokes of other folks,
 And mine should then succeed ‘em ;
 Nor would I chide a little pride,
 Nor heed a little freedom.”

With Wordsworth every verse was a brick in the temple his life was building ; he would have thought it profanation to despatch an ephemeral jingling joke by post and keep no record. Consequently we have no example of verse from him inspired by the humour of the moment, written on a subject not poetical. But take Sir Walter Scott’s correspondence with James Ballantyne as a specimen of what we mean ; he suits as an early example, for very rarely are rhymes strung together as he strung them, literally for only one ear, or indeed only for his own ; so heartily careless of his poetical credit. Though not poetry, what a great deal these jingling lines tell us of a poet ; how they let us into the character and feeling of the man ! How much there is that he would not, and perhaps could not, have unveiled in prose ! It is through such effusions that we learn something of him as author, about which he was so reticent. After finishing ‘ Paul’s Letters to his Kinsfolk,’ on whose name he plays somewhat carelessly, we see the ‘ Antiquary ’ in his mind’s eye :—

“ Dear James—I’m done, thank God, with the long yarns
 Of the most prosy of apostles—Paul ;
 And now advance, sweet heathen of Monk barns,
 Step out, old quiz, as fast as I can scrawl.”

In simple prose he would never have betrayed this confidence and fondness for any creature of his imagination. He thus rejoices over the completion of ‘Rob Roy’ :—

“With great joy
I send you Roy ;
’Twas a tough job,
But we’re done with Rob ;”

the “tough job” referring to the agonies of cramp and the lassitude of opium under which the novel was written. He was the most patient of men under interruption; only in verse does he indulge in a murmur, his temper really worn to a hair’s-breadth :—

“ Oh James, oh James, two Irish dames
Oppress me very sore :
I groaning send one sheet I’ve penn’d,
For, hang them, there’s no more.”

In momentary discouragement, when ‘Quentin Durward’ did not go off at the rate anticipated, “he did not sink under the short-lived frown,” but consoled himself with a couplet—

“ The mouse who only trusts to one poor hole,
Can never be a mouse of any soul.”

When overwhelmed with books, preparatory to his life of Buonaparte, he thus condenses his experience, and blesses himself in prospect of his gigantic task :—

“ When with poetry dealing,
Room enough in a shieling,
Neither cabin nor hovel
Too small for a novel ;

Though my back I should rub
 On Diogenes' tub,
 How my fancy could prance
 In a dance of romance ;
 But my house I must swap
 With some Brobdingnag chap,
 Ere I grapple, God bless me, with Emperor Nap."

When adversity came, the slip-shod muse was his confidant, the depository of his resolutions, cheering him onward in the untried stony path of authorship under compulsion,—the inexorable demand of duty. After soliloquies which would have done credit, both in matter and manner, to Shakespeare's fallen kings, we find him writing—

"I have finished my task this morning at half-past eleven, easily, early, and I think not amiss. I hope J. B. will make some notes of admiration ! ! ! otherwise I shall be disappointed. If this work answers—if it *but* answers, it must set us on our legs ; I am sure worse trumpery of mine has had a great run. I remember with what great difficulty I was brought to think myself anything better than common, and now I will not in mere faintness of heart give up hope. So hey for a Swiftianism—

I loll in my chair
 And around me I stare,
 With a critical air,
 Like a calf in a fair ;
 And, say I, Mrs Duty,
 Good-morrow to your beauty,
 I kiss your sweet shoe-tie,
 And hope I can suit ye.

Fair words butter no parsnips, says Duty : don't keep talking then, but go to your work again ; there's a day's task before you—the siege of Toulon. Call you that a task ? hang me, I'll write it as fast as Bony carried it on !—

And long ere dinner time I have
 Full eight close pages wrote ;
 What, Duty, hast thou now to crave ?
 Well done, Sir Walter Scott."

These dialogues with his conscience could hardly have been recorded without the playful veil of verse to hide their deep seriousness of self-sacrifice and atonement. Who can grudge him his escape to the country from the uncongenial scene of them, celebrated in these valedictory lines ?—

“ So good-bye, Mrs Brown,
I am going out of town,
Over dale, over down,
Where bugs bite not,
Where lodgers fight not,
Where below you chairmen drink not,
Where beside you gutters stink not ;
But all is fresh, and clear, and gay,
And merry lambkins sport and play.”

Scott wrote too easily to value himself on his gifts, or to be very sensitive to criticism. The poet jealous of his reputation, fastidious on his own account, or keenly hurt by adverse opinion, would never commit himself thus, even to the privacy of his diary, secured by lock and key. It thus illustrates a very marked characteristic. We can hardly fancy Waller, who, somebody said, spent a whole summer in correcting ten lines—those written in the Tasso of the Duchess of York—disporting himself in this way.

Scott here is addressing himself. The poet playing with his gift more commonly adopts the epistolary form, and compliments a friend with some facile careless specimen of his art. We do not want the amusement to become general out of the charmed circle ; but where once a name is won, a tribute of verse is felt to be a real token of friendship, and treasured

among the most flattering of compliments, as a private communication from Parnassus; especially when it illuminates some grave subject, or assumes an unexpected form, in which the poet selects you as the recipient of a new and choice conceit.

It must have been a delightful discovery to the diplomatist when Canning's Despatch first unfolded itself to eye and ear. And that Canning was a universal genius does not prevent the writer of the Anti-Jacobin and the famous Pitt lyric, "The Pilot that Weathered the Storm," being a poet in especial. Canning's general principle, it should be explained, was, that commerce flourished best when wholly unfettered by restrictions; but as modern nations had grown up under various systems, he judged it necessary to discriminate in the application of the principle; hence the Reciprocity Act, which placed the ships of foreign States importing articles into Great Britain on the same footing of duties as British ships, provided our ships were treated by the same rule in their turn; reserving, however, a retaliative power of imposing increased duties when the principle was resisted or evaded, as it was in the case of Holland—M. Falck, the Dutch Minister, having made a one-sided proposition, much to the advantage of his own country. A tedious negotiation dragging on from month to month ensued, without arriving one step nearer consummation; at last Canning's patience was exhausted. Sir Charles Bagot, our ambassador at the Hague, was one day (as we are told) attending at Court when a

despatch in cipher was hastily put into his hand ; it was very short, and evidently very urgent, but unfortunately Sir Charles not expecting such a communication, had not the key of the cipher with him. An interval of intense anxiety followed until he could obtain the key, when, to his infinite astonishment, he deciphered the following despatch from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs :—

“ In matters of commerce, the fault of the Dutch
Is giving too little and asking too much ;
With equal advantage the French are content,
So we'll clap on Dutch bottoms a twenty per cent.
Twenty per cent,
Twenty per cent,
Nous frapperons Falck with twenty per cent.

GEORGE CANNING.”

Tom Moore, subsequently meeting this M. Falck when ambassador at our Court, calls him a fine sensible Dutchman. Whether he ever knew the form in which the tables were turned upon him is nowhere stated. Surprise constitutes some of the fun and attraction of a very different rhymed letter, where Cowper fills a sheet—prose alike in aspect and matter—with a flow of the most ingenious and facile rhymes. It shows remarkable mastery over words ; and the little turns of humour, the playing with his own serious aims and with his friend's gravity of calling and reputation, are pleasantly characteristic of the man. The letter is long, but does not admit of curtailment, and the lurking rhymes keep up the reader's vigilance and attention.

"July 12, 1781.

"To the Rev. JOHN NEWTON.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I am going to send, what when you have read, you may scratch your head, and say I suppose, there's nobody knows whether what I have got, be verse or not: by the tune and the time, it ought to be rhyme; but if it be, did you ever see, of late or of yore, such a ditty before? The thought did occur to me and to her, as Madam and I, did walk and not fly, over hills and dales, with spreading sails, before it was dark to Weston Park.

"The news at *Oney* is little or noney, but such as it is, I send it—viz., poor Mr Peace cannot yet cease, addling his head with what you have said, and has left Parish Church quite in the lurch, having almost swore, to go there no more.

"Page and his wife, that made such a strife, we met them twain, in Dog Lane; we gave them the wall, and that was all. For Mr Scott, we have seen him not, except as he pass'd in a wonderful haste, to see a friend, in Silver End. Mrs Jones proposes, ere July closes, that she and her sister and her Jones Mister, and we that are here, our course shall steer, to dine in the Spinney; but for a guinea, if the weather should hold, so hot and so cold, we had better by far, stay where we are. For the grass there grows, while nobody mows, (which is very wrong), so rank and long, that so to speak, 'tis at least a week, if it happens to rain, ere it dries again.

"I have writ 'Charity,' not for popularity, but as well as I could, in hopes to do good; and if the Reviewer should say 'to be sure, the gentleman's muse wears Methodist shoes; you may know by her pace, and talk about grace, that she and her bard have little regard, for the taste and fashions and ruling passions, and hoidening play of the modern day; and though she assume a borrowed plume, and now and then wear a tittering air,'tis only her plan, to catch if she can, the giddy and gay, as they go that way, by a production on a new construction. She has baited her trap, in hopes to snap all that may come, with a sugar-plum.' His opinion in this, will not be amiss; 'tis what I intend, my principal end: and if I succeed, and folks should read, till a few are brought to a serious thought, I shall think I am paid, for all I have said, and all I have done, though I have run, many a time, after a rhyme, as far as from hence, to the end of my sense, and by hook or crook, write another book, if I live and am here, another year.

"I have heard before, of a room with a floor, laid upon springs, or suchlike things, with so much art in every part, that when you went in, you were forced to begin a minuet pace with an air and a grace, swimming about, now in now out, with a deal of state, in a figure of eight, without pipe or string, or any such thing ; and now I have writ, in a rhyming fit, what will make you dance, and as you advance, will keep you still, though against your will, dancing away, alert and gay, till you come to an end, of what I have penn'd ; which that you may do, ere Madam and you are quite worn out, with jigging about, I take my leave, and here you receive, bow profound, down to the ground, from your humble me,

W. C.

"P.S.—When I concluded, doubtless you did think me right, as well you might, in saying what I said of Scott ; and then it was true, but now it is due, to him to note, that since I wrote, himself and he has visited we."

This was written in a poetical year, when verse and matter crowded upon him. After finishing "Table Talk," we find him resolving to hang up his harp for the remainder of the year, and—

"Since eighty-one has had so much to do,
Postpone what yet is left for eighty-two."

Charles Lamb and Cowper are as little associated in our minds as poets can well be ; but there were points, especially of temperament, in common, and the Muse was a handmaid to them both ; they each liked to adapt her to domestic uses. Cowper acknowledged homely favours by giving a verse for a dish of fish, apostrophising a halibut in high-sounding blank verse, and explaining in neatly-turned heroics how the barrel of oysters was delayed on the road by the imprudent kindness of paying the carriage beforehand. Charles Lamb asked a favour through the same medium :—

"To WILLIAM AYRTON, Esq.

" My dear friend,
 Before I end
 Have you any
 More orders for Don Giovanni
 To give
 Him that doth live
 Your faithful Zany ?

Without raillery
 I mean Gallery
 Ones ;
 For I am a person that shuns
 All ostentation,
 And being at the top of the fashion
 And seldom go to operas
 But *in formâ pauperis.*

I go to the play
 In a very economical sort of way,
 Rather to see
 Than be seen,
 Though I am no ill sight
 Neither
 By candle light
 And in some kinds of weather.
 You might pit me
 For height
 Against Kean ;
 But in a grand tragic scene
 I'm nothing ;
 It would create a kind of loathing
 To see me act Hamlet ;
 There'd be many a damn let
 Fly
 At my presumption
 If I should try,
 Being a fellow of no gumption.

By the way, tell me candidly how you relish
 This which they call
 The lapidary style ?
 Opinions vary.

The late Mr Mellish
 Could never abide it ;
 He thought it vile
 And coxcombical,
 My friend, the poet-laureate,
 Who is a great lawyer at
 Anything comical,
 Was the first who tried it ;
 But Mellish could never abide it :
 But it signifies very little what Mellish said,
 Because he is dead.”
 &c. &c.

It does not seem, by the way, to have been Southey's turn, however much he played with fantastic measures, to versify for the amusement of his friends alone. All his composition—even his fun—had its destination for the press; but we find him slipping into rhythm to his friend Bedford:—

“ How mortifying is this confinement of yours ! I had planned so many pleasant walks to be made so much more pleasant by conversation ;

“ For I have much to tell thee, much to say
 Of the odd things we saw upon our journey—
 Much of the dirt and vermin that annoyed us.”

Charles Lamb was never careless or rapid. It was his amusement to play with his thoughts. The labour of investing a quaint fancy in fit wording was his pleasure. As in many other sports, the fun lay in the dressing. In fact, all that was characteristic in his mind needed exact expression; and now and then verse comes in to give the last point, as, after denouncing a cold spring, and May chilled by east winds, he concludes—

“ Unmeaning joy around appears,
 And Nature smiles as though she sneers.”

In complete contrast to this is the rapidity of Scott's habits of composition. His domestic verse has all the air of extempore. He seems to have considered it a duty to his chief to retain the minstrel character in his letters. In them he liked to exercise his pen in unfamiliar measures, proving how easy they all were to him. Canning had told him that if he liked he could emulate Dryden in heroics, his letter from Zetland beginning—

“ Health to the chieftain from his clansman true ;
From her true minstrel health to fair Buccleugh—
Health from the isles where dewy Morning weaves
Her chaplet with the tints that Twilight leaves ”—

is a very happy experiment in them ; but his account of the sea-serpent in dancing anapaests better suits our purpose, as bearing also upon the late reappearance of that tantalising fable. He writes from Kirkwall—

“ We have now got to Kirkwall, and needs I must stare
When I think that in verse I have once called it fair.”

He dates August the 13th, 1814.

“ In respect that your Grace has commissioned a Kraken,
You will please be informed that they seldom are taken ;
It is January two years, the Zetland folks say,
Since they saw the last Kraken in Scalloway Bay.
He lay in the offing a fortnight or more,
But the devil a Zetlander put from the shore,
Though bold in the seas of the North to assail
The morse and the sea-horse, the grampus and whale.
If your Grace thinks I'm writing the thing that is not,
You may ask at a namesake of ours—Mr Scott
(He's not from our clan, though his merits desérve it ;
He springs, I'm informed, from the Scotts of Scotstarvit) ;
He questioned the folks who beheld it with eyes,
But they differed confoundedly as to its size.

For instance, the modest and diffident swore
 That it seemed like the keel of a ship, and no more ;
 Those of eyesight more clear, or of fancy more high,
 Said it rose like an island 'twixt ocean and sky—
 But all of the hulk had a steady opinion,
 That 'twas sure a *live* subject of Neptune's dominion ;
 And I think, my Lord Duke, your Grace hardly would wish
 To cumber your house such a kettle of fish."

&c. &c.

Verse in such easy hands is a very useful instrument for turning a disagreeable incident into a joke, the poet can be imperious in it without giving offence, apologetic without meanness or servility. Thus in Lockhart's unlucky false quantity which made such a stir over Maida's grave. James Ballantyne had run off post-haste with the epitaph thinking it Scott's, and printed it with an additional blunder of his own. All the newspapers twitted the supposed author, and Lockhart properly desired that the blame should lie on the right shoulders. Scott, however, cared much more for the reputation of his son-in-law, the author of 'Valerius,' than his own, and rattled off an epistle to Lockhart with many reasons for letting the matter rest, of which the third is—

"Don't you perceive that I don't care a boddle,
 Although fifty false metres were flung at my noddle ;
 For my back is as broad and as hard as Benlomon's,
 And I treat as I please both the Greeks and the Romans ;
 And fourthly and lastly, it is my good pleasure
 To remain the sole source of that murderous measure.
 So *stet pro ratione voluntas*—be tractile,
 Invade not, I say, my own dear little dactyl ;
 If you do, you'll occasion a break in our intercourse.
 To-morrow will see me in town for the winter course,
 But not at your door at the usual hour, sir,
 My own pye-house daughter's good prog to devour, sir ;

Ergo—peace, on your duty, your squeamishness throttle,
And we'll soothe Priscian's spleen with a canny third bottle ;
A fig for all dactyls, a fig for all spondees,
A fig for all dunces and Dominie Grundys."

&c. &c.

We do not often catch him taking the high line about himself that really lies hidden under this disparagement of his scholarship. Tom Moore has recourse to the epistolary Muse under a very different mortification ; though there may be many tingling sensations after giving a bad dinner near akin to the discovery of being even party to a false quantity. The man in both cases feels lowered, and has to give himself a fillip to reinstate himself in his own good opinion. The dinner in question seems to have been an utter breakdown ; and where Luttrell and brother epicureans were the guests, all can sympathise in the mishap ; while it is only given to poets to express in beconing terms a consciousness of disaster. Prose apologies in such cases are heavy aggravations of the original ill-usage. Moore sitting down after seeing his guests off, aided by his lantern, and soothing his spirits by an imitation of Horace, might be glad he was a poet ; for what trouble does not in a degree dissipate itself under neat definition ?

" That bard had brow of brass, I own,
Who first presumed, the hardened sinner,
To ask fine gentlemen from town
To come and eat a wretched dinner ;
Who feared not leveret, black as soot,
Like roasted Afric at the head set,
And making towards the duck at foot,
The veteran duck, a sort of dead set ;

Whose nose could stand such ancient fish
 As that we at Devizes purvey—
 Than which, I know no likelier dish
 To turn one's stomach topsy-turvy."

&c. &c.

Luttrell himself could turn a verse, and was no doubt recompensed in some degree by the opportunity afforded for airing his talent, owning indeed that "your cook was no dab at her duty," but making the answering line "end with poetry, friendship, and beauty."

" And then to increase our delight
 To a fulness all boundaries scorning,
 We were cheered by your lantern at night,
 And regaled with your rhymes the next morning."

We must go back to an earlier date to find dinners a cheerful subject for the poet's muse. When a couple of dishes furnished a table to which it was not unbecoming to invite a lord, Matthew Prior could gaily extemporise an invitation to Harley; with no fears of a *contretemps* when a joint of mutton and a ham supplied the board:—

"AN EXTEMPORE INVITATION TO THE EARL OF OXFORD,
 HIGH TREASURER, 1712.

"MY LORD,—
 Our weekly friends to-morrow meet
 At Matthew's palace in Duke Street,
 To try, for once, if they can dine
 On bacon-ham and mutton-chine.
 If, wearied with the great affairs
 Which Britain trusts to Harley's cares,
 Thou, humble statesman, may'st descend
 Thy mind one moment to unbend,
 To see thy servant from his soul
 Crown with thy health the sprightly bowl;

Among the guests which e'er my house
 Received, it never can produce
 Of honour a more glorious proof—
 Though Dorset used to bless the roof.”

And when Gay versified the receipt for stewed veal, we may take for granted that the dish so glorified would not be lost in a crowd of rival candidates for favour, but was, no doubt, a crowning attraction of the occasion. “As we cannot enjoy anything good without your partaking of it,” he writes to Swift, “accept of the following receipt for stewed veal :—

“The receipt of the veal of Monsieur Davaux, Mr Pulteny’s cook, and it hath been approved of at one of our Twickenham entertainments. The difficulty of the sauce-pan I believe you will find is owing to a negligence in perusing the manuscript. If I remember right, it is there called a stew-pan. Your earthen vessel, provided it is close-topped, I allow to be a good *succedaneum* :—

“Take a knuckle of veal—
 You may buy it, or steal ;
 In a few pieces cut it,
 In the stewing-pan put it.
 Salt, pepper, and mace
 Must season this knuckle ;
 Then what’s joined to a place¹
 With other herbs muckle,
 That which killed King Will,²
 And what never³ stands still ;
 Some sprigs of that bed
 Where children are bred ;—
 Which much you will mend if
 Both spinnage and endive,
 And lettuce and beet,

With marygold meet,—
 Put no water at all,
 For it maketh things small ;
 Which, lest it should happen,
 A close cover cap on.
 Put this pot of Wood’s metal⁴
 In a hot boiling kettle,
 And there let it be
 (Mark the doctrine I teach)
 About—let me see—
 Thrice as long as you preach.⁵
 So, skimming the fat off,
 Say grace, with your hat off.
 Oh, then with what rapture
 Will it fill dean and chapter !”

¹ *Vulgo* salary. ² Supposed sorrel. ³ Thyme or *time*.

⁴ Copper. The allusion is to Wood, the coiner of Irish halfpence who furnished the text of the Drapier Letters.

⁵ “Which we suppose to be near four hours.”

The mention of Twickenham, where Swift was so keenly missed, reminds us of Pope's lines suggested by the vexed question of his descent. Swift in Ireland was contented to be called an Irishman; but the monument he put up to his grandfather in Goodrich (or Gotheridge) Church, to which he also presented a cup, implies, as Pope also took it, a desire to assert his English origin. He had sent a pencilled elevation of the tablet to Mrs Howard, who returned it with these lines on it scribbled by Pope. The paper was found endorsed in Swift's hand, "Model of a monument to my grandfather, with Mr Pope's roguery":—

" Jonathan Swift Had the gift By fatheridge, motheridge, And by brotheridge, To come from Gotheridge, But now is spoil'd clean And an Irish dean.	In this church he has put A stone of two foot ; With a cup and a can, sir, In respect to his grandsire. So Ireland change thy tone, And cry O hone, O hone ! For England hath its own."
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Swift is rarely spoken of in these days but as a misanthrope, abhorring as well as despising his fellow-creatures. Misanthrope as he might be towards parties and people he did not like or did not know, he could not live without friends, who were more necessary to him than they are to many philanthropists, and more constantly in his mind for their amusement and his own; and trusting, no doubt, to their immense opinion of his genius, he delighted, among other uses of the "Little language," in stringing together, in a sort of horse-play, jingling rhymes and interminable lines, in bold defiance of metrical rule, like the following,—

certainly never designed for the public eye, though they found their way to it:—

“SWIFT'S AND HIS THREE FRIENDS' INVITATION TO DR SHERIDAN.

“Dear Tom, this verse, which, however the beginning may appear, yet in the *end's good metre*,
Is sent to desire that, when your *august* vacation comes, your *friends you'd meet here* ;
For why should stay you in that filthy hole—I mean the *city so smoaky*—
When you have not one friend left in town, or at least *no one that's witty to joke wi' ye?*”

How he served his friends is shown, in one instance, by Gay's acknowledgments, who attributes to his good offices his appointment to attend Lord Clarendon to the House in capacity of secretary. “I am every day,” he writes, “attending my Lord Treasurer for his bounty to help me out, which he hath promised me upon the following petition, which I have sent him by Dr Arbutnott :—

“THE EPIGRAMMATICAL PETITION OF JOHN GAY.

“I'm no more to converse with the swains,
But go where fine people resort.
One can live without money on plains,
But never without it at court.
If, when with the swains I did gambol,
I arrayed me in silver and blue,
When abroad and in courts I shall ramble,
Pray, my lord, how much money will do ?”

Instead of the terrors of a competitive examination, his wardrobe was obviously Gay's first care on entering the public service: for subdivision of labour is a modern idea. A genius or a clever fellow used to be

considered fit, and to hold himself fit, at a moment's warning, for any employment that would bring him an income. A place or an appointment, whatever the duties, was an appropriate recognition of any form of merit or success. Scarcely more than half a century ago, Theodore Hook was made accountant-general to the Mauritius, and treasurer to the colony, for rattling off such verses as these in ridicule of the tag-rag deputations to Queen Caroline :—

“A rout of sham sailors
Escaped from their jailors,
As sea-bred as tailors
In Shropshire or Wilts,
And Mark Oldi’s smile, and hers,
Greeting as Highlanders,
Half a score Mile-enders
Shivering in kilts.”

It was a fit sequel to such a choice that the luckless treasurer, having got the money affairs of the island into inextricable confusion, was brought back in disgrace, entertaining his custodians, and amusing the tedium of the voyage by extemporisng songs, of which himself and his own predicament was the theme, and denouncing

“The atrocious, pernicious
Scoundrel that emptied the till at Mauritius.”

But we are digressing, and must not leave the elder generation without one specimen, gathered from his letters, of Swift’s graver epistolary style, addressed to the honoured friend who was emphatically the poet of the brilliant circle. It is an example of his delight-

fully easy versification, so peculiarly adapted for familiar uses :—

“ DR SWIFT TO MR POPE,

While he was writing the ‘Dunciad.’

“ Pope has the talent well to speak,
 But not to reach the ear ;
His loudest voice is low and weak,
 The *Dean* too deaf to hear.

A while they on each other look,
 Then different studies chuse ;
The *Dean* sits plodding on a book—
 Pope walks and courts the muse.

Now backs of letters, though design’d
 For those who more will need ’em,
Are filled with hints, and interlined,
 Himself can hardly read ’em.

Each atom by some other struck,
 All turns and motions tries ;
Till in a lump together stuck,
 Behold a *poem* rise !

Yet to the *Dean* his share allot ;
 He claims it by a canon ;
That without which a thing is not,
 Is causa sine qua non.

Thus, Pope, in vain you boast your wit ;
 For, had our deaf divine
Been for your conversation fit,
 You had not writ a line.

Of prelate thus for preaching fam’d
 The sexton reason’d well ;
And justly half the merit claim’d
 Because he rang the bell.”

Amongst epistolary effusions, Gray’s lines to Mason must find a place. Whether Mason had any idea of editing Shakespeare we cannot now remember, but

doubtless Gray had been irritated by a good deal of the criticism laboriously bestowed on the poet by his numerous commentators, and thus expressed his opinion of their value :—

“TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

“July 16, 1765.

“WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE *to Mrs Anne,*
regular servant to the Rev. Mr Precentor of York.

“A moment’s patience, gentle Mistress Anne :
(But stint your clack for sweet St Charitie) :
’Tis Willey begs, once a right proper man,
Though now a book, and interleav’d, you see.
Much have I borne from canker’d critic’s spite,
From fumbling baronets, and poets small,
Pert barristers, and parsons nothing bright ;
But what awaits me now is worst of all.
’Tis true our Master’s temper natural
Was fashion’d fair in meek, dove-like guise ;
But may not honey’s self be turned to gall
By residence, by marriage, and sore eyes ?
If then he wreak on me his wicked will,
Steal to his closet at the hour of prayer ;
And (then thou hear’st the organ piping shrill),
Grease his best pen, and all he scribbles tear.
Better to bottom tarts and cheesecakes nice,
Better the roast meat from the fire to save,
Better be twisted into caps for spice
Than thus be patched and cobbled in one’s grave.
So York shall taste what Clouet never knew,
So from our works sublimer fumes shall rise ;
While Nancy earns the praise to Shakespeare due,
For glorious puddings and immortal pies.”

“Tell me, if you do not like this,” writes Gray, “and I will send you a worse.” We think them good lines to find their home only in a letter; and Gray had no eye beyond his correspondent: and so

thought Mason, who writes answer, “ As bad as your verses were, they are yours, and therefore, when I get back to York, I will paste them carefully in the first page of my Shakespeare, for I intend it to be put in my marriage settlement, as a provision for my younger daughters.”

Editors have been often provocatives of verse. Tom Moore has his thoughts on editors, though on different grounds, but mingled in his case also with good cheer. The following querulous effusion fails to distinguish between the private, the social, and the public duties of the critic. “ I see my Lord Edward,” he writes, “ announced as one of the articles in the ‘ Quarterly,’ to be abused of course ; and this so immediately after my dinings and junketings with both editor and publisher.” Having occasion to write to Murray, he sent him the following squib :—

“ THOUGHTS ON EDITORS,

Editur et edit.

No, editors don’t care a button
What false and faithless things they do ;
They’ll let you come and cut their mutton,
And then they’ll have a cut at you.

With Barnes I oft my dinner took,
Nay, met ev’n Horace Twiss to please him ;
Yet Mister Barnes traduced my book,
For which may his own devils seize him !

With Doctor Bowring I drank tea,
Nor of his cakes consumed a particle ;
And yet th’ ungrateful LL.D.
Let fly at me next week an article.

John Wilson gave me suppers hot,
With bards of fame like Hogg and Packwood ;
A dose of black strap then I got,
And after a still worse of ‘Blackwood !’

Alas ! and must I close the list
With thee, my Lockhart, of the ‘Quarterly !’
So kind, with bumper in thy fist—
With pen, so *very* gruff and tarterly.

Now in thy parlour feasting me,
Now scribbling at me from thy garret,
Till ’twixt the two in doubt I be
Which sourest is, thy wit or claret.”

Byron never made verse his plaything. Even where it affected to be, it was a weapon which would have altogether failed of its purpose if it did not find its way and hit far beyond its seeming destination. Self-banished, he felt his exclusion from the intellects of the day, and sought for some medium of communication with them which should not compromise his pride. This medium was his distinguished publisher, at whose house his restless fancy imagined constant gatherings of wits and poets. To them he sent messages, as it were, to keep his name and fame still in men’s mouths—and the fear of him, an abiding influence. Mr Murray was thus the depositary of some lively *critiques* on men and books, as where Byron supplies him with a civil refusal of the ‘Medical Tragedy’ (Dr Polidori’s), spoken in his (Murray’s) own person. We give it as so far to our point that it is verse applied to a personal use, and affecting to be thrown off for the amusement of his correspondent :—

" There's Byron too, who once did better,
 Has sent me folded in a letter
 A sort of—it's no more a drama
 Than Darnley, Ivan, or Kehama ;
 So altered since last year his pen is,
 I think he's lost his wits at Venice.

. But, to resume :

As I was saying, sir, the room—
 The room's so full of wits and bards,
 Crabbes, Campbells, Crokers, Freres, and Wards,
 And others, neither bards nor wits.
 My humble tenement admits
 All persons in the dress of gent,
 From Mr Hammond to Dog Dent ;
 A party dines with me to-day,
 All clever men who make their way ;
 They are at this moment in discussion
 On poor De Stael's late dissolution ;
 Her book they say was in advance,
 Pray Heaven she tell the truth of France ;
 Thus run our time and tongues away—
 But to return, sir, to your play," &c. &c.

His publisher's name suggests other verses in a more genuinely playful vein, as well as more for the individual recipient. He felt Murray the link between him and his country, as apart from a few personal intimacies. His mind, we see, ran on the scene where his name was spoken and his works inquired after. He liked to recall "the table's baize so green," the comings and goings, the literary gossip, and all that was most opposed to the line he had chosen for himself. It associated him with poets, not only of the day, but of the earlier times :—

" Strahan, Jonson, Lintot of the times,
 Patron and publisher of rhymes,
 To thee the bard up Pindus climbs,
 My Murray.

To thee with hope and terror dumb
The unledged MS. authors come ;
Thou printest all—and sellest some—
 My Murray.

Upon thy table's baize so green
The last new Quarterly is seen,
But where is thy new Magazine,
 My Murray ?

Along thy sprucest book-shelves shine
The works thou deemest most divine—
The 'Art of Cookery' and mine,
 My Murray.

Tours, travels, essays, too, I wist,
And sermons to thy mill bring grist !
And then thou hast thy 'Navy List,'
 My Murray.

And Heaven forbid I should conclude
Without the Board of Longitude,
Although this narrow paper would,
 My Murray."

Complimentary verses, if premeditated, scarcely come within our subject. Playful they may be, but no style of composition has more severely tasked the faculties of versifiers, or been less congenial to the poet proper. We mean, of course, social verse; for addresses and dedications, profuse of compliment, swell the pages to a very inconvenient extent, of generations of poets. One exception, however, we must make to our exclusion of this vehicle for forced liveliness. What more easy and playful lines can we find than the following, or more suggestive of fun and enjoyment in the writer? and if any question the choice of subject, let them remember the argument of the "Splendid Shilling"—

"Sing, heavenly Muse !
 Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme,—
 A shilling, breeches, and chimeras dire."

"These lines were addressed to Mrs Legh on her wedding-day, in reference to a present of a pair of shooting-breeches she had made to Canning while he was a Christ Church undergraduate :—

"To MRS LEGH.

"While all to this auspicious day,
 Well pleased, their heartfelt homage pay,
 And sweetly smile, and softly say
 A hundred civil speeches ;
 My muse shall strike her tuneful strings,
 Nor scorn the gift her duty brings,
 Tho' humble be the theme she sings,—
 A pair of shooting-breeches.

Soon shall the tailor's subtle art
 Have made them tight, and spruce, and smart,
 And fastened well in every part
 With twenty thousand stitches ;
 Mark, then, the moral of my song ;
 Oh, may your loves but prove as strong,
 And wear as well, and last as long,
 As these my shooting-breeches !

And when, to ease the load of life,
 Of private care, and public strife,
 My lot shall give to me a wife,
 I ask not rank or riches ;
 For worth like thine alone I pray,
 Temper like thine, serene and gay,
 And formed, like thine, to *give away*,
Not wear herself, the breeches."

No man that has much in him can write to amuse himself in ever so easy a vein, without telling something that will convey information a hundred years or so after. Take, for example, Cowper's song on the History of a Walk in the Mud. What a picture it raises of the roads and paths of his day ! Often it

occurs to the reader to speculate on the use that is made of gardens in literature of a former date. How constantly Pepys, *e.g.*, "walks up and down," in discussion! what provision was made for this exercise in all old gardens! A terrace, we see, was no affair of mere state, it was a necessity of health; for if people walk for exercise in narrow bounds, it must be on a straight line, not one winding and turning. A country walk was an adventure for ladies in those days. Witness the immense preparations when the Duchess of Portland on first succeeding to Welbeck wished to walk to Creswell Crag, two miles and a half from the great house. The ladies were accompanied by the steward to show them the way, and two pioneers to level all before them. Paths were cut through thickets and brambles, and bridges made for swampy places. It was an expedition to be proud of. Walking was necessary to Cowper, and a lady companion equally necessary; hence the point he makes of having leave to walk in the Throckmortons' grounds. It is really sad to read (February 1785), "Of all the winters we have passed at Olney, this, the seventeenth, has confined us most. Thrice, and but thrice, since the middle of October, have we escaped into the fields for a little fresh air and a little change of motion. The last time it was at some peril we did it, Mrs Unwin having slipt into a ditch; and, though I performed the part of an active squire upon the occasion, escaped out of it upon her hands and knees." The occasion of the following composition was four

years earlier, the Sister Anne addressed at the close
being Lady Austen :—

“THE DISTRESSED TRAVELLERS, OR LABOUR IN VAIN.

An excellent new song, to a tune never sung before.

1.

“I sing of a journey to Clifton,
We would have performed if we could,
Without cart or barrow to lift on
Poor Mary and me through the mud.
Slee sla slud,
Stuck in the mud ;
O it is pretty to wade through a flood !

2.

So away we went, slipping and sliding,
Hop, hop, *à la mode de deux* frogs.
'Tis near as good walking as riding,
When ladies are dress'd in their clogs.
Wheels, no doubt,
Go briskly about,
But they clatter and rattle, and make such a rout !

3.

She.

Well ! now I protest it is charming ;
How finely the weather improves !
That cloud, though, is rather alarming ;
How slowly and stately it moves !

He.

Pshaw ! never mind ;
'Tis not in the wind ;
We are travelling south, and shall leave it behind.

4.

She.

I am glad we are come for an airing,
For folks may be pounded and penn'd
Until they grow rusty, not caring
To stir half a mile to an end.

He.

The longer we stay
The longer we may ;
It's a folly to think about weather or way.

5.

She.

But now I begin to be frightened
If I fall, what a way I should roll !
I am glad that the bridge was indicted,—
Stop ! stop ! I am sunk in a hole !

He.

Nay, never care !
'Tis a common affair ;
You'll not be the last that will set a foot there.

6.

She.

Let me breathe now a little, and ponder
On what it were better to do ;
That terrible lane I see yonder,
I think we shall never get through !

He.

So think I ;
But, by the by,
We never shall know if we never should try.

7.

She.

But, should we get there, how shall we get home ?
What a terrible deal of bad road we have passed !
Slipping and sliding ; and if we should come
To a difficult stile, I am ruin'd at last.
Oh, this lane ;
Now it is plain
That struggling and striving is labour in vain.

8.

He.

Stick fast there while I go and look.

She.

Don't go away, for fear I should fall !

He.

I have examined in every nook,
And what you have here is a sample of all.
 Come, wheel round ;
 The dirt we have found
Would be worth an estate, at a farthing a pound.

9.

Now, sister Anne, the guitar you must take ;
 Set it, and sing it, and make it a song.
I have varied the verse for variety's sake,
 And cut it off short, because it was long.
 'Tis hobbling and lame,
 Which critics won't blame,
For the sense and the sound, they say, should be the same.'

Southey calls this one of the playfulest and most characteristic of his pieces. We are glad to have a poet's testimony to its merits. It is a remarkable example of Cowper's special power of picturesquely reproducing a scene, incident, or situation ; and by touches minutely true, playing with the trivialities of life as an exercise of his apt and choice resources of language. The editors have probably thought the subject too trivial, for it has been "overlooked" in every edition of his poems that we know of. There is a poem of Coleridge's which comes under our class, having been clearly written with friends only in view ; but as it is inserted in his works, we will only indicate it by a few lines. It is that Ode to the Rain, composed in bed on the morning appointed for the departure of a very worthy but not very pleasant visitor, whom it was feared the rain might detain :—

" But only now, for this one day,
Do go, dear Rain, do go away !

O Rain ! with your dull twofold sound,
The clash hard by, and the murmur all round !
You know, if you know aught, that we
Both night and day but ill agree.
For days, and months, and almost years
Have limped on through this vale of tears,
Since body of mine and rainy weather
Have lived on easy terms together.
Yet if, as soon as it is light,
O Rain ! you will but take your flight,
Though you should come again to-morrow,
And bring with you both pain and sorrow ;
Though stomach should sicken and knees should swell,
I'll nothing speak of you but well.
But only now, for this one day,
Do go, dear Rain, do go away ! ”

Of all the intellectual gifts bestowed on man, the most intoxicating is readiness—the power of calling all the resources of the mind into simultaneous action at a moment's notice. Nothing strikes the unready as so miraculous as this promptitude in others ; nothing impresses him with so dull and envious a sense of contrast in his own person. To want readiness is to be laid on the shelf, to creep where others fly, to fall into permanent discouragement. To be ready is to have the mind's intellectual property put out at fifty or a hundred per cent ; to be unready at the moment of trial, is to be dimly conscious of faculties tied up somewhere in a napkin. What an engine—we are speaking of “the commerce of mankind”—is a memory ready with its stores at the first question, words that come at your call, thoughts that follow in unbroken sequence, reason quick at retort ! The thoughts we may feel not above our level ; the words

we could arrange in as harmonious order ; the memory, only give it time, does not fail us ; the repartee is all the occasion called for, if only it had not suggested itself too late, thus changing its nature from a triumph into a regret. It is such comparisons, the painful recollection of panic and disaster, the speech that would not be spoken, the reply that dissolved into incoherence, the action that belied our intention, or, it may be, experience in a humbler field, that gives to readiness such a charm and value. The ready man does seem such a very clever fellow. The poet's readiness does not avail him for such practical uses, and does not contribute to his fame or success at all in the same degree. It is the result—the thought, the wit, the sense—not the speed of performance, which determines the worth of his efforts. But we delight in an extempore effusion because of the prestige of readiness called into play in busy life ; at least this adds to the pleasure. The poet's best verses are the greatest, least imitable, wonder about him ; but we are apt to be most surprised when he shows his powers under immediate command : and good lines, struck off at a heat, do give us a vivid insight into the vivacity and energy of the poetical temperament, prompt in its action, ready at a call, and gaily willing to display its mechanical facilities. There is a specimen of Dryden's fluency in extempore verse, communicated and authenticated by Malone, which shows that foresight and composite action which a strong imagination seems to possess, uttering what it has prepared,

and composing what is to follow, at one and the same time—a habit or faculty observed in Sir Walter Scott by his amanuenses. This double action must belong to all rapid complex expression ; but the difficulty is enhanced and the feat magnified in proportion when rhythm and rhyme are added to the other requirements.

“Conversation one day after dinner at Mrs Creed’s running upon the origin of names, Mr Dryden bowed to the good old lady and spoke extempore the following verses :—

“So much religion in *your* name doth dwell,
Your soul must needs with piety excel ;
Thus names, like [well-wrought] pictures drawn of old,
Their owner’s natures and their story told.
Your name but half expresses, for in you
Belief and justice do together go.
My prayers shall be, while this short life endures,
These may go hand and hand with you and yours ;
Till faith hereafter is in vision drown’d,
And practice is with endless glory crown’d.”

Dr Johnson, readiness itself in his conversation, has left some remarkable examples of the extemporisng power. Mrs Thrale relates that she went into his room at Streatham on her birthday and complained, “ Nobody sends me verses now, because I am five-and-thirty years old ; and Stella was fed with them till forty-six, I remember.” “ My having just recovered from illness will account for the manner in which he burst out suddenly ; for so he did without the least previous hesitation whatsoever, and without having entertained the smallest intention towards it half a minute before :—

“ Oft in danger, yet alive,
 We are come to thirty-five ;
 Long may better years arrive,
 Better years than thirty-five.
 Could philosophers contrive,
 Life to stop at thirty-five,
 Time his hours should never drive
 O'er the bounds of thirty-five.
 High to soar, and deep to dive,
 Nature gives at thirty-five.
 Ladies, stock and tend your hive,
 Trifle not at thirty-five ;
 For how'e'er we boast and thrive,
 Life declines from thirty-five.
 He that ever hopes to thrive
 Must begin by thirty-five :
 And all who wisely wish to wive,
 Must look on Thrale at thirty-five.”

“ ‘And now,’ said he, as I was writing them down, ‘you may see what it is to come for poetry to a dictionary-maker; you may observe that the rhymes run in alphabetical order exactly,—and so they do.’”

His extempore parodies are by no means feats like this, which is really a bundle of valuable maxims; but how easily flow the lines to Miss Reynolds, in imitation of the ‘Penny Ballads,’ and how well the rhythm is caught!—

“ I therefore pray thee, Renny dear,
 That thou wilt give to me,
 With cream and sugar softened well,
 Another dish of tea.

Nor fear that I, my gentle maid,
 Shall long detain the cup,
 When once unto the bottom I
 Have drunk the liquor up.

Yet hear, alas ! this mournful truth,
 Nor hear it with a frown,
 Thou canst not make the tea so fast,
 As I can drink it down.”

Swift had an “odd humour” of extemporising rhymed proverbs, which he brought out with such apt readiness as to puzzle collectors of old saws. Thus, a friend showing off his garden to a party of visitors without inviting them to eat any of the fine fruit before them, Swift observed, “It was a saying of my dear grandmother’s—

‘ Always pull a peach,
When it is within your reach,’ ”

and helped himself accordingly, an example which, under such revered sanction, the rest of the party were not slow to follow.

The value of all specimens lies a good deal in the assurance of their authenticity as unprepared efforts, sudden plays of humour or ingenuity. The following professes also to be extempore; but there must have been finishing touches,—it surely passes human power to have been hit off in one sustained unbroken flow. That it answers our leading requirement as poet’s play-work, there can be no doubt. Whitbread, it seems, had perpetrated the unpardonable sin against taste and parliamentary usage, of introducing personal and family matters into his speech on a great public occasion, at a time when party feeling against Lord Melville was carried to a point of savage virulence. It is no wonder his witty friend was inspired by such an opportunity for firing a shot in return.

“FRAGMENT OF AN ORATION.

“Part of Mr Whitbread’s speech on the trial of Lord Melville, 1805, put into verse by Mr Canning at the time it was delivered.

“I’m like Archimedes for science and skill ;
 I’m like a young prince going straight up a hill ;
 I’m like (with respect to the fair be it said),
 I’m like a young lady just bringing to bed.
 If you ask why the 11th of June I remember
 Much better than April, or May, or November,
 On that day, my Lords, with truth I assure ye,
 My sainted progenitor set up his brewery ;
 On that day in the morn he began brewing beer ;
 On that day too commenced his connubial career ;
 On that day he received and he issued his bills ;
 On that day he cleared out all his cash in his tills ;
 On that day he died, having finished his summing,
 And the angels all cried, ‘There’s old Whitbread a-coming !’
 So that day I still hail with a smile and a sigh,
 For his beer with an E, and his bier with an I ;
 And still on that day in the hottest of weather,
 The whole Whitbread family dine altogether.
 So long as the beams of this house shall support
 The roof which o’ershades this respectable court,
 Where Hastings was tried for oppressing the Hindoos ;
 So long as that sun shall shine in at those windows,
 My name shall shine bright as my ancestor’s shines ;
 Mine recorded in journals, his blazoned on signs.”

Our examples have been uniformly taken from biographers’ collections of letters and private recollections. In only one case have we referred to the poet’s “poems” for the specimen in point; though our extract may, in one or two instances, have been removed from its original standing to a niche in what are emphatically called an author’s works.

It is obvious, on this and other grounds, that our poets at play can include no living brother within

their circle. Poets must first be known and valued by their works. They must have done great things before we care for trifles from their hands. But this knowledge once acquired, and an estimate formed, a further intimacy may be promoted by some acquaintance with performances which do not rank among their works. It would be very unjust to measure them by such specimens as we have strung together; but having established their reputation with us, trivialities, like many of these, if they do not contribute to their fame, yet suggest versatility, and in most cases add an engaging touch of homely nature to a great name. They are all examples, as we began by saying, of that essential element of the poet's nature when in working effective order—exceptional life and spirits. Nobody writes verse for his own pleasure, or even relief, without the barometer of his spirits being on the rise. They are tokens of that abiding youthfulness which never leaves him while he can write a living line. The poet, we need not say, is for ever sighing over the youth that is past and gone, not taking note of the youth that remains to him, altogether independent of years. But, in fact, he is a boy all his life, capable of finding amusement in matters which the plodding man of the world considers puerile, and so conferring on his readers and lovers some share of his own spring, some taste of the freshness which helps to keep the world alive.

SCHOOLS OF MIND AND MANNERS.

THE word education has always carried with it two distinct ideas—the acquisition of knowledge, and the discipline which fits for society. One man means by it the power that stimulates thought and brings it in relation with the past; another, the training which adapts the individual for intercourse with his kind. The education of knowledge is compatible with an utter deficiency in the habits and qualities which help men socially; the education which takes the body in hand, and the mind as it regulates temper and manners, may accomplish its object with little help from large and accurate knowledge, or culture of the purely intellectual faculties. We say culture, as distinct from native sense, for a basis of understanding is indispensable for all success: nor can the merest external training effect its purpose unless the intellect works even energetically towards the aim in view. The brain has its part in every effort—nothing is well done without its sustaining action. In old days we

find these two modes of training had their appropriate spheres and seasons rigidly assigned to them. Collegiate life drilled the mind : the court—if the pupil had to be made a fine gentleman—took the body and manners in hand, and educated through the outside and the contagion of example ; through deportment, expression, action, voice—all that manifestation of self that acts on others, and which is caught by observation, and by contact with what is decorous and graceful in manner and phrase. In universities men were made learned ; in high-bred society they were taught to please : neither sphere infringed on the other. Those who passed their lives in colleges thought polite society frivolous ; and fine gentlemen and ladies regarded the seats of learning as the homes of “rusticity and morosity.” Of course there were acknowledged exceptions—the scholars who were also men of the world, and men of distinguished manners who were also deeply read ; but it used to be assumed that learning and manners could not be learned in the same school. The satirists of last century delighted in showing up the uncouth pedantry of the one class, and the ignorance, levity, and affectation of the other. The accomplished gentleman must first learn from books, and then set forth on his travels ; from which, if we may judge from the notices of the time, more marvels were expected than were often compassed. The bear and the bear-leader, fresh from the seat of learning, made a poor figure to practised eyes. “Most of our travelling youth,” writes Lady Pomfret from

Florence (1740), “neither improve themselves nor credit their country. This, I believe, is often owing to the strange creatures that are made their governors, but as often to the strange creatures that are to be governed.” But the system was an acknowledged one. This “inundation of poor creatures” had a recognised claim on their compatriots; and the great lady, in fact, made her drawing-room at Florence a school of manners, when, to provide against the inconveniences of this inundation as a constant invasion, she opened it for a general reception once a-week. “I shall be at home every Friday evening, and at no other time, when I shall also have the pleasure of seeing all the Florentine nobility, whose hospitality and politeness I can never enough commend.” But this all belongs to a past day. Learning and propriety of manners have agreed to a compromise. If we have fewer prodigies of erudition, we have fewer prodigies of another sort. Our scholars have learnt even to dispute and quarrel in polite terms; and college training, if it does not accomplish what nothing but intercourse with good general society can accomplish, at least does not overlay its pupils with a rust hard to be rubbed off.

So far, however, in our remarks, education has meant only the education of men. In the last century, at any rate, the one prevailing idea of education for women scarcely included learning at all. It meant simply and emphatically the discipline which fits for society. Through more than half that period manners were the thing in question—manners, and how to

improve them; for clearly there was everywhere a great falling off from what had been, whether in France or England. We find Madame de Maintenon (in 1707) confiding to her friend, the Princesse des Ursins, in very plain language, her feelings on this point. "I confess to you that the females of the present day are to me insupportable: their ridiculous and immodest dress—their snuff, wine, gluttony, coarseness, and indolence—are all so opposite to my taste, that it is natural for me to dislike them." The '*Spectator*', at a date two or three years later, remarks upon the same characteristics, and dreads the conclusion of the war for the influence peace may have upon English ladies. "The whole discourse and behaviour," he writes, "of the French, is to make the sex more fantastical, or, as they are pleased to term it, more 'awakened,' than is convenient either with virtue or discretion. To speak loud in public assemblies, to let every one hear you talk of things that should only be mentioned in private or in a whisper, are looked upon as parts of a refined education. At the same time, a blush is unfashionable, and silence more ill-bred than anything that can be spoken." Under this teaching he records the behaviour of a fine lady, newly returned from France, at the performance of '*Macbeth*', who, before the rising of the curtain, breaks out in a loud soliloquy, "When will the dear witches enter?" and before the play was half through, has formed a little audience for herself. "This pretty childishness," he says, "is not to be attained in perfection by ladies who do not travel for

their improvement," to add, as it were, point to their ignorance; in imitation of those ladies of the court of France who thought it ill-breeding to pronounce a hard word right — for which reason they took frequent occasion to use hard words, that they might murder them. This authority further adds, "That a lady of some quality at court having accidentally made use of a hard word in a proper place, and pronounced it right, the whole assembly was out of countenance for her."

We are not to wonder, when the acknowledged school of politeness had fallen into this decadence, that English manners should be open to criticism. A writer in the '*Tatler*' laments (August 1709) "the unaccountable wild method in the education of the better half of the world—the women. We have no such thing as a standard of good breeding." "I was the other day at my Lady Wealthy's, and asked one of her daughters how she did. She answered, she never conversed with men. The same day I visited at Lady Plantwell's, and asked her daughter the same question ; she answers, 'What is that to you, you old thief ?' and gives me a slap on the shoulder." "Certain it is," he adds, "that the taste of grace and beauty is very much lowered. The fine women they show me nowadays are at best but pretty girls to me who have seen Sacharissa, when all the world repeated the poems she inspired. They tell me I am old : I am glad I am so, for I do not like your present young ladies." He is apt to think that parents imagine their daughters will be accomplished enough if noth-

ing interferes with their growth or their shape. He sees with indignation crowds of the female world lost to society, or condemned to a laziness which makes life pass away with less relish than in the hardest labour, and forms the idea of a female library, for the cultivation of their minds, with the promise, however, that the books shall not be so deep as to hurt a single feature by the austerity of their reflections. Books, however, came very little into the popular ideas of the right training for girls. Needlework and a good carriage were the two points aimed at as the important things. The father wants to send his little girl of nine to a boarding-school in a good air. "I would endeavour," he writes, "she might have education—I mean, such as may be useful, as working well, and a good deportment." The wife opposes "that she is too much a woman, and understands the formalities of visiting and a tea-table so very nicely, that none, though much older, can exceed her." All that is said or implied by Swift of the ignorance of women of this period is borne out by the essayists. He complains that "not one gentleman's daughter in a thousand can read or understand her own natural tongue, as any one may judge who can have the patience to hear them when they are disposed to mangle a play or a novel. They are not so much as taught to spell in their childhood, nor can ever attain to it in their whole lives."

But women, as a fact, being so much more independent than men of regular hard head-training, we

mean in everyday social intercourse,—having, as we see, such a knack of catching the prevailing tone of thought,—this ignorance did not really press on the literary public mind to the same extent as hoydenish manners. The finely-mannered woman, whether she could spell or not, being necessarily a woman of good understanding, held her own wherever she found herself.

But all this while there was a tradition of better teaching. One lady wrote an essay to revive the ancient education of gentlewomen in religion, manners, arts, and tongues, with an answer to the objection against this way of education; and the few women who were educated in book education were taught on a thorough plan. Dr Carter, father of *the Miss Carter*, gave to all his children alike a learned education. The daughters showed a singular aptitude. “My sister Margaret,” writes the distinguished Elizabeth, “is studying, or rather seizing upon, Greek.” But how extraordinary these pursuits were in women we may gather from the fact, that it was gravely put about in Deal that Miss Carter was going to be a member of Parliament. “Here’s all Deal,” writes a member of her family, “in amazement that you want to be a member of the Parliament House; and Mrs —— was told it, but so strongly affirmed that it was no such thing, that she came to our house to ask.” All learning in those days, indeed all literary taste, turned a woman into a celebrity with the drawbacks of the position. Thus Johnson amuses himself

with Lady Hartford's poetical turn in his life of Thomson. “‘Spring,’” he writes, “was published in 1728, with a dedication to Lady Hartford; whose practice it was to invite, every summer, some poet into the country, to hear her verses and assist her studies. This honour was one summer conferred on Thomson, who took more delight in carousing with Lord Hartford and his friends than assisting her ladyship's poetical operations, and therefore never received another summons.” And yet this lady, besides being a good wife who nursed her husband tenderly in the frequent fits of gout earned by these carousals, was a woman of cultivation and intelligence, as we see from her correspondence with her friend Lady Pomfret, whose experience of travellers of the grand tour we have quoted above. But the rarity of literary distinction in the women of her day, gave a tone to those who cultivated their minds, which provokes a smile in the modern reader. These two retired ladies of the bed-chamber compliment one another on the excellence of each other's letters, in a strain which sounds almost fulsome to our ears, but is really honest surprise in both that so much thought, observation, and accuracy of expression should flow from a female pen. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, more witty and less estimable, comes into their circle. It was an intellectual set of fine ladies, distinct and by themselves. More popular than art, poetry, or the classics, or the books that dealt with such matters, was a volume from the French, ‘The Art of being Easy at all Times and in all Places,

written chiefly for the use of a Lady of Quality'—a work which, if it only succeeded in imparting its lessons to the reader, was not only a useful study for that time, but one which none, even of our more enlightened day, would willingly be without. No age is without its examples of women who have left their mark on literature beyond their own time; but we gather that the Countesses and Lady Marys, the Miss Carters and Miss Talbots, did not advocate for the use of their sex the same teaching they had acquired for themselves. There is no doubt that the clever women who wrote or led society, thought manners the most material point for young ladies with whom they were concerned. Dignity of deportment and behaviour, the graces which set off women in society, the good breeding that made home peaceful and delightful, the piety which regulated private conduct without disturbing social life, formed the ideal of the most thoughtful and serious. Some did not go so far in their requirements; and with these there probably was not wanting a sense of complacency in being singular in their attainments. But also there was no machinery for a diffused higher education for girls. We do not doubt that the *unlearning* was more valuable than the teaching of the ordinary school.

"I am glad," writes Mrs Montague, as late as 1773, "you intend sending my eldest niece to a boarding-school. What girls learn at these schools is trifling, but they unlearn what would be a great disservice—a provincial dialect, which is extremely ungenteel, and other tricks that they learn in the nursery. The carriage of the person, which is of great importance, is well

attended to, and dancing is well taught. As for the French language, I do not think it necessary unless for persons in very high life. All the boarding-schools are on very much the same plan, so that you may place her wherever there is a good air and a good dancing-master."

This seems worldly enough. Whatever a woman's actuating principles, they would now have been veiled by a decorous reference to religion and morals. But, in truth, manners were the paramount consideration in all polite circles, as constituting the only distinction—as they will always be the main distinction—between classes: and how to shine in the drawing-room was the test of them. It was this prevalent idea that stirred the republican spirit of Day to write his 'Sandford and Merton,' and provoked the sting of the epilogue—

"Hearts may be black, but all should wear clean faces ;
The graces, boys ! the graces, graces, graces !"

But good people, with whom religion was a reality, laid much the same stress upon good breeding. It was a virtue as well as a grace. Mrs Delany is almost as serious as the worldly fine lady when she comes to the dancing-master. "Dunoyer," she writes to her sister, who consults her on education, "is now, I believe, the best dancing-master in London. His price is high, but he will give the Pauline a better air in a month than a less skilful dancing-master would in three. I believe Lady Cowper has good interest with him, and that may make him take more pains." And she adds, "There is nothing I wish so much for Mary, *next* to

right religious principles, as a *proper* knowledge of the polite world." The ordinary teaching that girls were put under she takes for granted ; but clearly, to be perfectly well-bred both at home and abroad was a point of more weight with her than accuracy and extent of knowledge. " Nobody can do so much good in the world who is *not* well-bred as those that *are*." These were the days, indeed, when superficial teaching was thought the proper teaching for girls ; when every science had its feminine language, as Hindu ladies talk with a difference and with softer terminations than their lords ; as 'The Young Ladies' Geography,' which is to be read instead of novels, 'A Young Ladies' Guide to Astronomy,' 'The Use of the Globe for Girls' Schools,' and 'The Ladies' Polite Letter-Writer,' and so on. At a date when men learnt to be scholars and gentlemen, not simultaneously, but in a course, it was not unnaturally taken for granted that thoroughness of knowledge in girls was incompatible with the prime essential in woman, perfect manners,—that she should look well, hold herself well, behave herself with dignity and grace. Ruling in her own sphere, she must be content with an entirely subordinate place where dry knowledge was in question. If she knew more than other women, she was to conceal it, and beware of the example of

" The reasoning maid, above her sex's dread,
Had dared and read, and dared to say she read."

We have changed all this, not only in tone but in

practice. There is no more condescension to feminine weakness in the teaching of girls ; what they learn under the modern fashionable system they may learn thoroughly. But as it does not belong to human nature, stationary or progressive, to observe a golden mean—as it is inevitable, where one thing is in the ascendant, that something else should go down—we are not sure that the supreme point now made of mental cultivation, as we see in the modern literature of education, does not threaten a very serious falling off in manners. It is not only neglect but a positive counter-teaching in certain quarters that strikes us, as though the old rules of good behaviour, and any strict discipline on this point, stood in the way of intellectual development. It speaks for itself that good teaching must be better than bad, and that good teaching disposes to a love of learning ; nor do we see any necessary connection between advance of knowledge and decay of manners. To us, indeed, it seems that unless the training of manners, in the full sense of the word, goes along with the teaching of knowledge, the teaching fails of its main purpose as culture.

As one may say that there is a way of learning trifles which strengthens mind and will, all depending on the learner's view of life as a performance or a duty, so there may be a way of acquiring knowledge which yet makes very little impression on character and conduct. In this sense a cultivated manner may be as good a guarantee of a cultivated mind as the most well-chosen list of books plodded through under

the stimulus of emulation or some imminent examination ; or even for the love of it, if the social duties and checks of good breeding are untaught and disregarded. For, in fact, what a great deal of study of motives and character and of self-study also, what a training of sympathies, goes to the formation of a courteous and engaging manner ! Separate learning from discipline, and we really do not know where we are, or what benefit we are conferring on the pupil. To the run of people the use of learning is, in some sense, remote from the lessons learnt, and may be resolved into discipline rather than knowledge. How few people have to do in after-life with the precise teaching of their childhood and youth ! What difference, we might ask, does it make to most women whether the astronomy they learnt as girls was called ‘The Use of the Globes’ or not ? Let us not be understood as undervaluing that inestimable advantage, exact knowledge ; only we believe the common experience will justify our impression that fructifying knowledge of this high order is for the few. The majority of people learn through the reading of others, not through their own : one part of mankind browses among books for the intellectual nourishment of the species. It is not what most people acquire for themselves at first hand which places them above their ignorant forefathers, but the atmosphere they breathe, the enlightenment of the age, through the influence of its choicer or more laborious spirits. What they read or skim for themselves—or perhaps we should

say, what they might read, what they are politely assumed to read—tells little on them; they cannot assimilate it, their private stock of learning being mainly of use in helping to conceal their ignorance; but they hear others talk, they catch a tone, and thus learn unconsciously and accidentally, aided no doubt by glimmerings of once faintly apprehended truth.

What, then, becomes of those who have never been taught that great fundamental in good manners, the habit and art of listening? an art which, to judge by the training of some children, threatens to become obsolete, an art which no people can learn late in life. Writers on the duties of the religious life tell us that contemplation is a habit of mind difficult of acquirement, and needing much practice and self-control. Listening is the same to children, when the talk that passes is not addressed to them individually, when their attention is not courted by lowering the tone to their taste. Yet for certain spaces of time, to listen both to conversation and reading as a discipline, we think all who were ever subjected to it will allow to have been a very strengthening, invigorating process. The human voice conveys ideas which, read in books, would excite no interest, make no impression; and even dulness, compulsory quiet, often stimulates thought, by compelling the mind to turn to itself, which desultory reading, to escape from it, would never have stirred. There is an activity and inventiveness of mind especially induced by inevitable quiet, of which biography furnishes striking examples,

and which we believe many a private experience can bear witness to; and there is a study of character which can scarcely take its rise early enough for the finer perceptions without this condition.

This train of thought has been stimulated, not so much by the absence of old-fashioned discipline in manners and the first principles of good breeding in modern households, as by the tone now adopted in books for the young; books written not merely for amusement, but instruction—books not addressed to the parents, but their children;—ridiculing old restraints; assuming that the race has been oppressed long enough by absurd restrictions; that children have come into the world to make a noise; that it is the part of good parents to put up with it, and to make every household arrangement with a view to their sole pleasure and convenience. Hitherto manners have always been considered one of the ends of education; but we see tokens of abatement of that jealous care on the subject which alone can succeed in its object. Neglected manners are rarely good manners. No doubt in fiction, and in descriptions of childhood for older readers, a certain wildness and defiance of rule is treated as a proof of spirit, and so far of promise; but it is comparatively lately that books written for children with a didactic purpose, represent disregard of proprieties as the natural indications of mental and moral superiority. At the risk of being thought to make a bugbear of trifles, we will illustrate our argument by an extract from a popular child's

serial, we do not doubt in the nursery or schoolroom of very many of our readers ; and bearing on its title-page the name of a clergyman in deservedly high and general esteem :—

“It was one of the great conveniences of Redburn vicarage, that you could make yourself heard all over the house without the least trouble. For example, if there were not enough bread-and-butter cut for the schoolroom tea, you had only to shout ‘Bread-and-butter !’ at the top of your voice, and Dinah quickly brought up a fresh supply from the kitchen ; or if Perry was up on the top of the house administering a worm to a particularly interesting family of starlings in the chimney-pot, and did not notice the time, and eight o’clock struck, Hugh had just to call out ‘Prayers !’ at the foot of the stairs, and down came Perry, leaving a worm wriggling out of a wide-open yellow mouth. Dr Guest was of opinion that this was owing much more to the strong lungs and loud voices of his family than anything especially convenient about the house ; but the children differed from him. So bells became quite unnecessary articles at the vicarage, which was a good thing, as there was scarcely one that was not broken.”

The father, it goes on to say, does not like this state of things, and when he comes home tired from parish visiting, complains to his wife “somewhat bitterly” that the house is a bear-garden. “My dear, what are these children about ? it is really almost intolerable.” Mrs Guest looked at him, and only smiled. She was the gentlest, sweetest, best little mother in the world. You know what a good mother means ? It means, among other things, “no nerves,” “no headaches,” “no fancies,” “no thought of self ;” and so she only smiled at the racket going on. Is not this as much as to say that the children of the

house are masters of the house ; that if the father complains that his house is turned into a bear-garden, he is a grumbler ; that the real, true, and admirable mother prefers her children's pleasure to her husband's comfort ; that if the mother has " nerves " and " headaches," it is her duty to suppress them, and not damp her children's spirits by using them as a plea for suppressed voices and cautious treading ; that no one with admitted infirmities can fulfil the mother's part ; that consideration is due, not from children to their parents, but from parents to their children ; that home is to be ruled by boy-and-girlhood suffrage ? We know that some will think we are turning a joke into a serious matter ; but it is not a joke to instil into children's minds that this is a pleasant state of things, and that those boys and girls are fortunate who can shout for bread-and-butter, and bawl " Prayers ! " from the bottom of the house to its chimney-pots. Of course these unruly young folks are clever, and conscientious, and so on ; but what we complain of is, that they are supposed to be cleverer and more studious and more high-principled *because* they lead this wild, rude life. We are quite willing to allow that children should have their own region for noise and licence, because their minds are cramped without it ; but the moment this region is extended beyond proper limits—the moment, at least, when the sense of a barrier is lost—their education takes a retrograde step. The children whose father and mother are also gentleman and lady, and who are yet allowed to shout, bawl, and riot unre-

proved, are losing caste, and fitting themselves for a lower social level. In cases where the Government schools have good and able teachers, the checks imposed by the civilities and refinements of social life constitute the main difference between the education of distinct classes. A clever child of the artisan class has, wherever there is a free library, access to the best books on all subjects, and has perhaps better grounding than, at any rate, the girls of a class many grades above it; *but* it has no restraints. No eye regulates its movement, no sensitiveness modulates the intonation, no authority interposes with its rules. There is no spot sacred to order, decorum, subdued voice, and periods of inevitable silence. What we fear in the present concentration of attention upon book-learning in our leading authorities and administrators of general education (in reaction from a like concentration upon manners in the last century which followed the collapse spoken of), is the deposition of the drawing-room from its place as an educator. Sydney Smith somewhere remarks on the superiority he has observed in point of behaviour and manners of the children of people of rank. He does not go into causes,—the view is suggested by a particular instance; but the superiority, such as it is, is surely due to the sense of respect which all surroundings must infuse into the minds of children who see their elders live in state, in a solemnity of splendour and order which their wildest spirits cannot dream of turning into Bedlam. But every drawing-room—every room, indeed, the peculiar

seat and throne of father and mother—the room where that mysterious outlet to the world, “company,” is received and entertained, exercises this awe-inspiring sense in its degree. It is not the positive splendour but the relative which impresses the child’s imagination. Manners have no sanctuary in the labourer’s cottage, as ordinarily ruled, nor in the long rows of artisan dwellings; but wherever the mother presides in her proper domain, there she may set up—if she has the art, and, much more, the patience—may set up a school which shall fit her child for society, in its graceful civilised sense, by inculcating habits which go farther than books in adapting not only manners but mind, we will say, for this arena.

The apprehension of society as an idea is one of the distinctions between gentility and the commonalty. The younger members of the working classes have more intercourse with each other out of family life than their social betters; but they have not the idea of a social sphere instilled into their minds, as it is upon those whose early observation is set to work—of a sphere where they are to be viewed on all sides, and judged by a general opinion. The necessity of self-repression makes room for thought, which those children miss who have no formalities to observe and no customs to respect—who blurt out every irrelevance—who interpose at will with question and opinion as it enters the brain. It is this unrestraint which lays the foundation of that self-centred view of life to be observed in the socially untrained. It is by listening,

not by talking, that sympathy is acquired—that intellectual sympathy that makes men companionable. This abandonment of old restraints, of which we are jealous, may be one of the reasons why conversation as an art is going out. Children don't learn to talk by chattering to one another, and saying what comes uppermost ; neither does reading suffice to this end, single-handed. Good talk should first be recognised as such in others. Attention is the most influential tutor in the fitting use of the tongue. Where we see good talk disregarded by a party of young people, there, we may be sure, the chances of their ever shining socially are small indeed. Mere listening with intelligence involves an exercise of mental speech. Not, of course, that we would confine children to the act of attention ; but good talk cannot be maintained under interruption, and observant silence opens the pores of the mind as impatient demands for explanation never do.

Taking all this into account, while freely admitting the superiority of modern teaching from books, we yet regard them as only partial educators. Now and then, even, the sight of children brought up in the old system, which put behaviour first—not because it *is* a system, but that the tastes of the mother lean that way—awakes a tender though blind regret for the old relation of lessons to the day's work. For still there are children who accept their lessons as tasks to be learnt, without much considering the future use they are to be put to ; whose keener interests are for what they see and hear ; whose minds are present to the scene

around them ; who respond with dutiful alacrity to the training of manners ; who are obedient to rule, courteous, friendly, hospitable to strangers in their small, innocent way ; who greet with a smile welcome company, and brighten under it ; who watch their mother's eye and obey her behests, and so doing catch her grace of air and movement. These are children, whatever their literary attainments, who will grow into gentle, refining influences ; who will perpetuate good traditions, and maintain the charm as well as the virtues of family life. And, moreover, whatever their store of exact knowledge, they will have a diction and facility of expression which perhaps will more than stand comparison with others deeper read but less practised in social intercourse. It all comes to this : on the one hand, children cannot learn manners without being trained to them ; on the other, it is equally certain that want of thoroughness in early teaching is a defect scarcely to be got over in after-life, and often bitterly resented as well as regretted by the sufferer. But each day will have its notions of the relative importance of the two, and throw the weight of its influence on the popular side.

While we generalise, our real subject, and often our argument, relates mainly to the education of women. It has been in this that the distinction between the two principles of training with which we began is seen in most marked contrast. The ordinary education of the last century and that of the modern high school presents this contrast in its

most pointed divergence of aim. It cannot be denied that the advocates of thoroughness are supported by the success of girl students in many an unaccustomed field of competition. But the stimulus of emulation, in their case so potent, has its period, and wants that succeeding goad of necessity which follows the boy into life. He has all along known that his learning is means towards a very intelligible end. If the girl (not required to work for a living) thinks so in the class-room, society soon undeceives her. Only a genuine love of knowledge (and the rarity of this, in the universal experience, shows that it must always be rare) will sustain her enthusiasm. Hence we see, in so many cases, that the girl whose education has been one of exceptional severity of strain both in its subjects and thoroughness in battling with them, collapses at once when thrown into the natural interests of her age, and cannot be distinguished from other girls either in the interests that absorb her or the aims she works towards. It may be that she is even less fitted for the new scene, the spirit of emulation following her into the fresh arena. The strong excitements of girlhood find her less prepared than where the moral grounding of manners, with all their unconscious yet ever-binding restraints, has been the especial object of the educator. All we would argue is, that these restraints should have been inculcated along with the cultivation of intellect, that it is as great injustice to the child to permit licence in manners, as to leave it to scramble

into knowledge or to miss the road for want of an adequate guide. It is an especial injustice to the girl of merely average intelligence to assume that if the teaching is but sound, and morals duly inculcated, manners may go to the wall, and be treated as a joke ; for if accurate knowledge and grasp of what is once acquired is beyond the learner's intellectual calibre, and the manners have been left to themselves, where is she ?

But in treating matters thus seriously, we may be doing our plea injustice. The school of manners, like all other schools, must have its recreation-time, its playgrounds, its theatre of performance. In these days of boating, cricket, football, and athletic games of boys and men—games which take up the time from graver studies, and yet excite the emulation not only of the players, but of tutors and governors in our seats and high places of learning, and which interest the public more than intellectual contests and successes, which are their more proper concern—we do not think it necessary to apologise for the place dancing held in the old system of girls' training. All notices of the last century both as regards the bringing up of girls and the habits of social family life, show that dancing was an education in a sense quite different from what it is, and indeed can be, now, under the changes fashion has accomplished. When Dr Guthrie slipped a bank-note into a poor scholar's hand, discovering his talent, and pitying the awkwardness which would stand in the way of its

development, and told him he would be “much the better of a quarter at the dancing,” he had not “round dances” in his mind, but the acknowledged discipline of another school of the art. Dancing had in fact two aspects. It was a grave study, as the main road to a graceful action and carriage; and it was a domestic habit and constant resource; a standing diversion, not confined to ball-rooms and state days, nor to the girlhood and boyhood of life, but a universal relaxation and exercise up to middle life, and almost beyond, to judge by the fiction of the period. The accomplishment, once acquired, was a distinction; nor was it allowed to rust for want of use. The *chaperones* of that day were not condemned to sit in dazed, yawning rows. It was possible, nay, expected of mothers—even in supreme family ceremonials, of grandmothers—to give the sanction of their participation in the performance. Mrs Delany, who represents for her sex the mind and accomplishments of her century—admired, respected, imitated in youth and venerated in age—brings the full weight of her *prestige* to bear upon the uses and importance of dancing in this twofold character. No tutor or head of a house in our day can more keenly appreciate a boating triumph than she the ordeal of a State ball successfully passed by some youthful favourite. Whether it is Lady Betty Bentinck rehearsing her clothes and jewels, and practising dancing in her train, under the tender scrutiny of mother and friend, “looking mighty well, and a very genteel

figure," who finds the ball, for which these studies were made, very delightful, for all the heat and crowding; or Miss Wesley (aunt of the Duke of Wellington), "the finest girl I ever saw," "performing miracles at the Castle, and much the best dancer there." Her frequent notices of the Wesley family show that this crowning distinction was not won without care. If the Duke ever said that the battle of Waterloo was won at Eton and Harrow, something of the same kind might be said of his own share in the victory. One does not immediately see the connection between generalship and iron will, and that success in the arts of music and dancing which distinguished his progenitors; but the fact remains. "I never met," Mrs Delany writes, "so delightful a man as my hero, Mr Wesley (first Lord Mornington); so much goodness and friendliness combined." At one time he is her partner in a dance of twenty couple; at another, he and she entertain the young people. "I was placed at the harpsichord, and after jangling a little, Mr Wesley took his fiddle and played to his daughters' dancing." Again: "We mustered up five couple, and danced two hours. The master of the house (Mr Wesley) fiddled and danced the whole time." This cheerful family only followed the fashion. She looks forward one Christmas to a fortnight in the country, where there is to be company enough to make six couple for country-dances; and "we are to dance every night." Dancing was so habitual a resource, that fiddles were apparently

as readily at hand as in Molière's comedies. "While we were eating, fiddles were sent for—a sudden thought. We began before eleven, and held briskly to it till half an hour after two. We were eight couple of as clever dancers as ever eye beheld, though I say it that should not." The ball-room was an arena, and also a spectacle for the lookers-on. People complimented one another, and received the felicitations of friends. "First you must know," writes Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, "that I led up the ball, which you will stare at; but what is more, I believe in my conscience I made one of the best figures there." These records belong to much the same time as when the learned Elizabeth Carter relieved her severer youthful studies by similar relaxations in less courtly scenes. "I walked three miles yesterday," she writes, "in a wind that I thought would have blown me out of this planet, and afterwards danced nine hours, and then walked back again."

That this training of the person in a particular exercise had success in its own line, and results in keeping with the care and time devoted to it, we gather from a description of this same country-dance, in its most finished performance, given by De Quincey in his impressions of a State ball at Windsor, to which he, with an Eton schoolfellow, was invited by Queen Charlotte. To him it had a mystic significance almost Dantesque. As embodying the poetry of our subject—not to say its tragedy—and as a characteristic example of the writer's exquisite style, the

reader will not resent our giving the passage without curtailment :—

“ Of all the scenes which this world offers, none is to me so profoundly interesting, none (I say it deliberately) so affecting, as the spectacle of men and women floating through the mazes of a dance ; under these conditions, however, that the music shall be rich, resonant, and festal, the execution of the dancers perfect, and the dance itself of a character to admit of free, fluent, and *continuous* motion. But this last condition will be sought vainly in quadrilles, &c., which have for so many years banished the truly beautiful *country-dances* native to England. Those whose taste and sensibility were so defective as to substitute for the *beautiful* in dancing the merely *difficult*, were sure, in the end, to transfer the depravations of this art from the opera-house to the floors of private ball-rooms. The tendencies even then were in that direction, but as yet they had not attained their final stage : and the English country-dance was still in estimation at the courts of princes. Now, of all dances, this is the only one, as a class, of which you can truly describe the motion to be *continuous*—that is, not interrupted or fitful, but unfolding its fine mazes with the equability of light in its diffusion through free space. And wherever the music happens to be not of a light trivial character, but charged with the spirit of festal pleasure, and the performers in the dance so far skilful as to betray no awkwardness verging on the ludicrous, I believe that many people feel as I feel in such circumstances—viz., derive from the spectacle the very grandest form of passionate sadness which can belong to any spectacle whatsoever. *Sadness* is not the exact word, nor is there *any* word in any language (because none in the finest languages) which exactly expresses the state—since it is not a depressing but a most elevating state to which I allude. . . . From all which the reader may comprehend, if he should not happen experimentally to have felt, that a spectacle of young men and women *flowing* through the mazes of an intricate dance, under a full volume of music, taken with all the circumstantial adjuncts of such a scene in rich men’s halls ; the blaze of light and jewels, the life, the motion, the sea-like undulation of heads, the interweaving of the figures, the *ārāxv-xλωσις* or self-revolving both of the dance and the music, ‘ never ending, still beginning,’ and the continual regeneration of order

from a system of motions which for ever touch the very brink of confusion,—that such a spectacle, with such circumstances, may happen to be capable of exciting and sustaining the very grandest emotions of philosophic melancholy to which the human spirit is open. The reason is, in part, that such a scene presents a sort of mask of human life, with its whole equipage of pomps and glories, its luxury of sight and sound, its hours of golden youth, and the interminable revolution of ages hurrying after ages; and one generation treading upon the flying footsteps of another; whilst all the while the overruling music attempers the mind to the spectacle, the subject to the object, the beholder to the vision."

The country-dance has always been the pet of English literature, whether as a picture, a school of manners, or the natural and yet orderly exercise for youthful spirits. They have gone out, and dances rather exciting than exhilarating have taken their place. But as the excitement does not extend to the observer as did the exhilaration, the pleasures of the round dance remain unsung. How pleasant are all the notices of the country-dance in Miss Austen, whether it is Fanny Price for once in spirits, and practising her steps before the ball, or Mrs Elton wondering how her style and Frank Churchill's will suit; or the young people counting up available couples, getting up an extempore dance at a moment's notice, or suggesting that fine analogy between the country-dance and marriage, with which Henry Tilney puzzles his partner, whose attention has been rudely called off from him by John Thorpe! " You will allow that in both man has the advantage of choice; that it is an engagement between man and woman, formed for the advantage of each; that it is their

duty each to endeavour to give the other no cause for wishing that he or she had bestowed themselves elsewhere," and—while she still sees them as "so very different"—his concession, "In one respect there certainly is a difference. In marriage, the man is supposed to provide for the support of the woman, the woman to make the house agreeable to the man; he is to purvey, she is to smile. But in dancing, their duties are exactly changed; the agreeableness, the compliance, are expected from him, while she furnishes the fan and the lavender-water. That, I suppose, was the difference of duties which struck you?" Miss Austen, no less than Mrs Delany, wrote in the long reign of the country-dance, without a thought of its being superseded. George Eliot looks back upon it tenderly as a thing of the past—as the dance in which all classes can mingle, and all ages take their share. Thus, "Mr Poyser, to whom an extra glass had restored his youthful confidence in his good looks and good dancing, walked along quite proudly 'to be introduced to his partner the great lady of the Hall,' secretly flattering himself that Miss Lydia had never had a partner in *her* life who could lift her off the ground as he could." Walter Scott, who could scarcely have known the pleasures of dancing from experience, is as regretful in his tone. Late in life he writes in his journal with mingled pleasure and bitterness: "Here [in the assembly rooms at Durham] I saw some very pretty girls dancing merrily that old-fashioned thing called a country-dance, which Old

England has now thrown aside as she would her creed if there were some foreign frippery offered instead." Nor was verse wanting in its appropriate dirge. A writer in the 'London Magazine,' 1823, denounces the immediate success of the substitute, then received into favour :—

"Look where we will, joy seems estranged,
The dance its very mirth has changed,
Now formal, once how thrilling !
The limb alive, the spirit supple,
The gallant casting off two couple,
All frozen to quadrilling."

All things come to an end ; so it may be said that the country-dance only shared the common fate. But in looking for causes we find it had at one and the same time two enemies, each in strongest opposition to the other, but united in their attack on this point. And first we will name Fashion.

"No event," writes Mr Raikes, "ever produced so great a sensation in English society as the introduction of the German waltz in 1813. Up to that time the English country-dance, Scotch steps, and an occasional Highland reel, formed the school of the dancing-master, and the evening recreation of the British youth even in the first circles. But peace was drawing near, foreigners were arriving, and the taste for Continental customs and manners became the order of the day. The young Duke of Devonshire, as the Magnus Apollo of the drawing-rooms in London, was at the head of these innovations ; and when the kitchen-dance became exploded at Devonshire House, it could not long be expected to maintain its footing in less celebrated assemblies. In London, fashion is or was everything. Old and young returned to school, and the mornings which had been dedicated to lounging in the Park were now absorbed at home in practising the figure of the French quadrille, and whirling a chair round the room to learn the step and measure of the German waltz."

Beau Brummel, of whom nothing stands the test of time—not a single saying, not a single taste or sentiment—advises a friend to educate his daughters in France on this very argument. “English education,” he explains, “may be all very well to instruct the hemming of a handkerchief and the ungainly romp of a country-dance, but nothing else.” Fashion, however, was somewhat slower in its conquests sixty years ago than now; but to the middle classes the attack on dancing came at the same time from another quarter. Young people were told that dancing was wrong. Davie Deans’s objections were put into English. It was a shocking thing for immortal souls to spend their time in what at best was trifling away precious moments. Young girls were asked how they should like to die dancing? and as they could not say they should, they felt without an answer. It was one thing to dance with as little question of the right to do so, as the children in the market-place, and another to have to defend the practice against the vehement denunciations of religious enthusiasm, versed in all the arguments of controversy. Dancing under protest, dancing knowing that the act would bring the performer under sentence of excommunication in certain quarters, changed the character of the pleasure to sensitive minds. This onslaught was partly due to the descent of religious controversy into another rank of thinkers. It will generally be observed that the leaders of a movement are tolerant of the habits and amusements of the classes who make no pretence of

climbing to their heights of thought. The head that has been at work on hard knots, and battling with heads of equal strength in controversy, finds relief in the contemplation of youth making merry after its kind ; but where the critic is on the same intellectual plane with the dancer, and must either censure or share the sport, then the polemical instinct finds its field. Yet, after all the changes we note, many have been due to some undercurrent of thought, with which neither religion nor fashion had much to do. In fact, young people were beginning to regard society as an intellectual arena. Cleverness which, in Mrs Delany's time, had related to the heels, now took its throne in the head. It was an age of good talkers ; every circle had its example. Poetry was a telling influence ; fancy and invention were awakened—not only in some distant, unapproachable region, but in many a home family circle. German came into fashion ; a smattering of mathematics was acquired ; there was an interchange of sentiment on subjects not hitherto supposed within the feminine range. Young ladies no longer turned from talk worth hearing to discuss in a whisper the last cargo of fans, but were among the most eager and therefore charming of listeners. With sparkling eyes, as we find them described, and blushes, showing the courage of the venture, they would make their voices heard in advocacy of a favourite author ; and so a new era began.

The religious world of young ladies relieved more active labours of benevolence by fancy-work, with

which they filled the baskets of itinerant *protégés*; the bright girls of another school felt an innocent breath of intellectual ambition, and would at any time rather talk with a clever man than dance with him: and thus dancing ceased to be the education it had been, with all its painful early training in the matter of deportment.

That deportment had its discipline of a very severe kind, we gather from autobiographers. Thus Mrs Sherwood describes her childhood as passed in steel collars and back-boards, as well as restrictions of another kind; for her mother never allowed her children to interrupt conversation—"they were compelled to listen, whether willing or not." The name of this lady—subsequently a pillar of a certain sentimental religious party school—brings us to the mention of the boarding-school to which she went after this strict home rule—one remarkable for the number of noted women it introduced into the world. It was kept first at Reading, then in London, by a Monsieur and Madame St Quentin—he a French emigrant, and friend of Dr Valpy. There the pupils saw much of emigrants, learnt to speak French, acted plays, &c.; and whether an extraordinary amount of talent and genius found its way there, or whether a vein was struck at a lucky point of time—whether success was due to good steady teaching or to the unusual relaxations which prevailed there—certain it is that a list of distinguished names are associated with this school; names with nothing in common in tone or aim, but

which remain familiar sounds for some distinction or other. Among them we will mention besides Mrs Sherwood, L. E. L., Miss Mitford, Lady Caroline Lamb, and even Jane Austen, who was there as a mere child, not to separate her from her beloved sister Cassandra. This school is a connecting link between the schools described by Mrs Montague as places where girls don't learn much, but unlearn the tricks of the nursery, and the higher girls' schools of the present century, alive at least in theory to the duty of fitting girls, not only in their manners for society, but in their minds for the world. There happen to have fallen in our way some records (found in the papers of a lady, once a pupil, of remarkable attractions and acquirements) of superior girls' schools—superior, we must assume, from their results ; established, the one early in the century, the other some twenty or more years later ; both, however, impressing the reader with the change that years have wrought on popular ideas on female training. It is the custom of novelists and educational reformers alike to hold up the mistress of the old, fashionable, or genteel boarding-school to ridicule ; but we must say that both these examples show an uncommon fitness for the task undertaken, and a most conscientious sense of duty. The date of the first letters belong to about the time when Beau Brummel, in retirement and disgrace, warned his friend against English training, lest he should see his “ girls coming into the room upon their elbows, hear them talk in broad native phraseology, and thump the Woodpecker upon a dis-

cordant spinnet." Probably Mrs J., as we will call her—who from her writing and other tokens we gather to have been elderly—would have thought any of these enormities better than the slippery graces, which were all he cared for. For, incidentally, we find her imparting to this her favourite pupil her views of the basis of education to be laid in early childhood.

"Whatever the child's temper, there can be no hesitation as to the grand basis, her understanding rightly the condition of the human race as beings accountable to God for that obedience to His commands which, from their fallen nature, they cannot pay if they do only *what they like*. This a child can comprehend, as also its obvious consequence, the necessity of self-control ; it can likewise comprehend from the declaration 'in the sweat of thy brow,' &c., that nothing good can be obtained without labour ; and when convinced of these fundamental truths it will receive a summons to an impalatable task as the voice of wisdom and kindness, and not as an exercise of arbitrary power. There may be deficiency in the performance, but not a resistance of the will ; whereas, obedience without the acquiescence of a child's judgment reaches only the outward momentary act, leaving the will uncurbed, and perhaps rebellion striking deeper root within."

This strikes us as the thought of a very practical mind, as indeed is shown all along. Thus, on the dress of her pupils, she writes to the mother, "As I do not like my pupils at their naturally attractive age to be rendered conspicuous by too gay a display, I am tenacious of their style of dress being neat and simple." And she goes on with rules which we imagine would scarcely be tolerated by the young ladies whom we meet in gay files of becoming and varied costumes. There is every sign of thorough

grounding, of the work of education going on zealously, and being made pleasant to the pupils—Mrs J. herself, full of plans and resources for bringing home to the mind the teaching that she considers suited to the feminine character and intellect. Deportment and dancing are duties like the rest, and very vigilantly attended to. And that religion was a subject of very earnest teaching, and all the influences of Church ordinances brought to bear, we gather from the mother's comment on her daughter's confirmation. She writes—

"Your account of your confirmation was truly gratifying to us, and the impression it has made upon your mind could not but afford us the most heartfelt pleasure. It is a ceremony much too little thought of in the present day. When I mentioned the preparation and examination you would have to undergo to the F—— people, they laughed at me, and said it was never usual to examine respectable people for confirmation."

Being a responsive and favourite pupil, the subject of all this care keeps up a correspondence after leaving, and pays visits, which give us further insight into school life. Thus, a year or two after, she describes herself on a week's visit as a school-girl again. "Tuesday last I danced quadrilles with M. N. He said if I would practise with the young ladies a week it would set me up again. I could acquire all the new steps very well in a week." And she gives the history of a curtsey, on paying a call with her dear hostess :—

"Mrs J. begged me before entering the room, not to discredit her school by my curtsey. My heart beat violently. I approached the venerable Mrs A. with the profoundest respect, put

my feet in order to make a complete curtsey, extended my hand, seeing she was inclined to shake hands with me, and began to drop ; but unluckily the old lady's arm was so confined with rheumatism, that by the time I had nearly reached the ground our hands were about a yard apart, when they ought to have joined. I was struck with the ludicrousness of the incident, and completely disconcerted."

It was not only on points of ceremony that Mrs J. adhered to ideas once formed. She represents her class. Strong opinions are necessary in the teacher. No one can inculcate principles without a tenacity of grasp on them herself ; and, naturally, we find indications on all hands of what is called prejudice. Mrs J. was clearly a character. Her young friend having been to see the Roman Catholic chapel in Moorfields, just built, it was made the subject of a homily. Mrs J., writes one pupil, "laments greatly that that persecuting Church should be so much countenanced. She fears that this land will again see Queen Mary's reign :" to which Mrs J. adds a postscript of warning much in the spirit of the old precept, " Beware of Papishes, and learn to knit," though couched in language more becoming the intellectual pretensions both of teacher and scholar. In politics she is even more decided in tone : " Never marry a Whig," is her emphatic and repeated injunction. It was the time when politics ran high, and the unfortunate Queen Caroline was before the world, at once a prominent subject and object. Processions such as Theodore Hook commemorates in verse,—the half a score Mile-enders got up as Highlanders and shivering

in kilts ; the tailors escaped from their jailors, passing for sailors,—defiled before the door of Mrs J.'s nursery of loyalty and propriety. On the Helot principle, the girls were allowed a furtive peep at the show of "tinkers and shopkeepers' apprentices." "One of the hired carriages stopped opposite, containing," writes one, "some *ladies* and *gentlemen*, whose *footman* took from his pocket a bottle and one glass—it appeared like malt liquor of some kind. When he had poured it out, he presented it to the ladies, who, without any ceremony, drank, and appeared to enjoy it. Then the procession moved on, and the bottle was again placed in the footman's pocket." In spite of teaching and warning, however, Radicalism found its way to a *quondam* pupil. It is touching to read how keenly the desertion is felt :—

"I have myself met with a sore vexation—no less than of having one of my late pupils disgrace herself by going to Brandenburgh House, where some address was presented to the poor Queen. Little did I expect that a young person (of whose heart and understanding I had so good an opinion) would so soon forget the sentiments inculcated upon her whilst under my roof, as within a few months after quitting it to join a tag-rag and bob-tail rabble, consisting, in spite of satin gowns and ostrich-plumes, of every variety of vulgarity and disreputability. Having identified herself with such, she has rejected and forfeited my esteem, and therefore I can never see her again with pleasure. Had it been from compulsion, I should have acquitted her; but her parents, whatever may be their politics, are too indulgent not to have excused her going, had she felt a repugnance to it."

We extract such passages to show the influence aimed at, and in most cases secured. Mrs J. was an

influence in a sense it would be difficult for a school-mistress to be now. The personal character was a power, and one that extended itself beyond the period of direct contact. Thus she has views on the position of woman as subordinate out of her own province, and had a test by which to gauge a pupil's intellectual cultivation. It was enough if she could have appreciated and enjoyed Dr Johnson's society, and been by him thought worthy of it. She fears that her pupil is too ambitious of intellectual distinctions, and warns her that—

"The acquirement of knowledge is delightful within proper limits, beyond which it becomes vanity and vexation of spirit. To be learned, a genius, or in any way a prodigy, I account to be a misfortune to a female, as it removes her from her natural sphere. Providence has endowed each sex with the faculties requisite to perform the respective duties assigned to it, and successfully ordained that from the right fulfilment of these, happiness shall result. Had a *third order* been necessary, doubtless one would have been created, a *midway* kind of being. A woman, therefore, striving to transform herself into such, is at the best unproductive of good, and in most instances only makes herself discontented."

It is of course observable that the subordination of the sex in no way interferes with the good lady's value for her own opinion on large questions. We give the passage as good sense still in its measure, and as a sign of the clash between eighteenth and nineteenth century ideas then beginning to be felt. For this repression of genius as unwomanly, though belonging to the ideas of the time, was giving way under the new currents of thought rising to the surface of so-

ciety. In letters dating some ten years later, from the other specimen schoolmistress whose correspondence we have access to, younger in character as well as in age, we find a longing for originality as something above mere powers of gaining knowledge. In speaking of a young woman distinguished for her acquirements, her criticism is that she has little of the cleverness for which she gets such credit.

"I know her well. I know she is not gifted as she passes for being. Industry and memory, with all her life devoted to effect what these can do, have done much; but no compass of mind, no powers to investigate and combine, no one original idea—always the mere copyist."

This, we see, is a governess who would not allow freshness and originality in a pupil to escape her, nor fail to cultivate it when detected. But in her rules she is, like Mrs J., strongly against display, though not so distinct in wording. Young things should trust more to their carriage than to finery; the less remarkable the bonnet the better, the less ribbon the better,—and so on. And of show-off in another field: "If any dare tell you I cultivate a passion for display and showing blue, do me the justice to correct them by word as well as by deed." What we observe in these letters is the distinctly feminine ideal in the mind of all the writers. Dress, language, manners, all have the lady-like in view. No lady could travel without an escort. This difficulty constitutes one of the troubles and expenses of the time. On one occasion it was planned that two brothers were to take

charge of their respective sisters and travel home together. "Will calls it great *fun*," writes his fastidious sister. "Though we do not use that word, perhaps we feel the same thing." Any approach to slang was forbidden to the cultivated girlhood of that period; and *fun*, it seems, was not free from the charge of keeping low company—the critics of the previous century telling inferior authors that they mistook *vulgarity* for ease, *fun* for humour, and *pertness* for wit. It was the time when language as well as dress had to be distinctly feminine—when neither foresaw the rough-and-ready uses to which they would one day be turned. Certainly the convenience of an independent workaday existence was then little consulted in costume. The contrast between the head-gear of that time and this, represents at one glance the change that has come over things. "Bonnets," writes the same Will, reporting London fashion, "are about the size of the top of a post-chaise." At any rate, thus overshadowed, no girl would be mistaken for her brother, which she can easily be now, with hands in her coat-pockets, and a hat the facsimile of his own, as she fits herself out for all sports and all weathers. All publicity was felt, not so much unfeminine, as impossible. The distinction between private and professional life was one not conceivably to be got over by the women of the home life and the social circle. The English character was supposed incapable, except under professional training, of throwing aside its natural reserve. In the letters before us, we find a pupil describing to her sister her

singing-lessons, and the master's difficulties under this insular infirmity. "S—— is an invaluable master, though a most conceited creature. His accompaniments are the most delightful I ever heard, which he performs with the greatest ease. He complains without ceasing of the want of feeling in the English ladies, and endeavours in vain to make us smile and sigh and look sad in the proper places." The sort of sheepishness here disclosed is combated in our whole modern system of life as well as education, and with considerable success.

We may have seemed desultory to our readers, but we can assure them that we have never lost sight of our opening distinction between the two meanings of the word education. We have gone through some varieties of it; all—the training of manners, the discipline of deportment, the old quaint ceremonials, the restraints of silence, the decorums of polite society, the curtseys and obeisances of the humbler classes, the deference of the young towards the old, the observance of children for their parents, the severities of home rule, the long practice and self-restraint necessary to success and full enjoyment even of the favourite recreation,—all imply training more or less painful and laborious; a never-relaxed vigilance in the teacher—docility, patience, and self-command in the learner. Our survey tends to the conclusion that at no time have manners been so left to form themselves as now. We hear of people forgetting their manners, but some of our youth stand in danger of never learning them.

While so great a point is made of thoroughness in all other learning, the mere A B C grounding of manners threatens to be left untaught. It seems supposed that, given so much intellectual culture, boys and girls, by the mere process of growing old, turn into polite, considerate men and women. We do not believe it. Many arts and sciences are more easily acquired late in life than a good manner. If people are to behave well, they must be early taught to behave—a practice that demands unceasing sacrifices of minute personal liking to the general pleasure and convenience.

Lately hints have been thrown out that in certain high circles high breeding is going out of vogue. We do not fly at such high game, especially as culture of mind is there alleged to be as much neglected as refinement of manner. It is the classes with whom thoroughness of knowledge is felt of such supreme importance, who need to be sometimes reminded that, in intercourse with his fellows, it is, after all, manners that make the man.

A D A M B E D E.¹

THE reign of romance is an extending one. It gains ground in spite of the perpetual protests of utilitarianism, useful knowledge, and Puritanism. The number of those who "never read novels" diminishes season by season, or those who make the complacent profession have to qualify it by an ever-increasing list of exceptions; for, in fact, every man's own favourite field of thought falls by turns under the illuminating ray of the magician. Fancy and invention grow bold in their experiments, taught by success that there are very few scenes in the world which skill cannot turn into a good picture: so one by one the strongholds of commonplace, actual life yield to their invasion. Having long expatiated in flights of heroism, startling incidents, violent contrasts, and all extremes of character and fortune till their legitimate vein is exhausted, they have sought a fresh one, and found themselves

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as potent in extracting interest and wonder out of the everyday externally uniform life which the many must lead, as they were of old in the exceptional careers and incidents to which we still attach the title of romance, which fall to the lot of few indeed, and which have delighted because of their strangeness and the novelty of the ideas and impressions they awake in us. There is a grave class of minds who cannot give their sympathy but through their experience: to such the efforts of imagination, and the description of scenes and modes of life of which they have no personal knowledge, will tell nothing, will be slighted as frivolities beneath the regard of men engaged in the actual business of life. But let one of this class be a real observer, and find his immediate field of speculation illustrated by a keener observation and clearer insight than his own, and he will no longer be insensible to the charm of invention. All that goes to a good novel will not be thrown away upon him, and to his surprise he will feel himself stirred by as keen an interest in fancied sorrows, as engrossed in the fortunes of imaginary persons and mere shadows, as any novel-reader he ever despised.

In this way, one by one, they fall into the train. Thus persons who had resisted Walter Scott, because they had no old-world sympathies, were subdued by Sam Weller and Mrs Gamp; those who could not condescend to these vulgar wits found ‘Vanity Fair’ to reproduce what they knew of the world; the harsh, unattractive, but vivid nature of ‘Jane Eyre’ and

'Shirley' caught some not to be snared by smoother blandishments. Mrs Gaskell's pictures of mechanic life, amid whirling wheels and smoking chimneys, were accepted by others as an embodiment, for which they could vouch, of the mode of existence of the masses; so utilising fiction, elsewhere a barren, unprofitable pleasure. The 'Heir of Redclyffe' brought to their allegiance many who never fancied before that they could get through a novel. The 'Caxtons' won a more precise class, who had pronounced all previous romance vain and demoralising; and Mr Kingsley's amusing doubt and dramatised paradox struck others who rejoiced in a freedom from prejudice, and found their favourite calling of propounding knotty questions all the pleasanter, and not less puzzling for being wrapped in a seductive veil of allegory: and now, in contrast with all these, we conclude our brief enumeration with 'Adam Bede,' a story which we believe has found its way into hands indifferent to all previous fiction, to readers who welcome it as the voice of their own experience in a sense no other book has ever been.

Certainly 'Adam Bede' has a voice of its own which chimes in a telling, because natural and simple way, with associations and thoughts which have been lying half developed and struggling for expression in many minds. It is remarkable, too, for a steady protest against exclusiveness, a characteristic of our time, as prevalent in our literature as in society, and as marked in the high-toned religious fiction of the day

as in its more natural home, the fashionable novel ; but from which a large number must always revolt, either from personal feelings or a sense of injury to the claims and rights of humanity. In another point the notices of the press show an undesigned coincidence of response—and that is the tone of the author on religious matters ; orthodox and serious, but viewed rather in their moral than doctrinal aspect, as more within the scope of his subject and turn of thought. It strikes us that the laity, unconsciously to themselves, recognise a champion : here is a religious utterance which somehow differs a good deal from the general tone of the pulpit utterances we have been used to. Conscience takes a higher stand than has been sometimes found compatible with the war of doctrine waged in this polemical age. With all the force of wit, humour, common-sense, and pathos, some home questions have been put which sermon-hearers think it will not be easy for their pastors to answer ; and, above all, Mrs Poyser's immortal illustration has avenged much irritation, discontent, and weariness, which the sufferer did not know before could be defended and justified. Do any two people ever talk three minutes over this story without quoting, with a particularly sly relish, the definition of Mr Ryde's style of preaching, as though it met some case very near home, which, out of respect or delicacy, they will not further indicate ? No names may be mentioned, the subject may be treated as a general one, but not the less does it go home to each individual's business

and bosom ; and the next time he hears a cold, harsh, controversial sermon—which may very likely be next Sunday—not only does the joke soothe at the time, answering to the marbles the Master Poysers carried to church, with the prospect of “ handling them a little secretly during the sermon,” but he feels armed with a reason for his repugnance which before seemed to need an apology : for whatever views this writer expresses, they are clearly arrived at by a process of thought ; the weight of calm conviction gives value to every sentiment, whether we agree or not ; and we feel that in this story we have the experience of a life.

‘ Adam Bede’ has the difficulty, as it is commonly considered, of a prominent moral, too often an impediment to the natural development of a story ; but owing to its simplicity and breadth, and its appeal to universal assent and sympathy, in this instance it gains a support, as assisting to develop character, and to work out and give verisimilitude to the plot, if the simple structure of incidents can be so denominated. Its moral is, that the past cannot be blotted out, that evil cannot be undone. This conviction is expressed with a strength and persistency that turns into a sort of inspiration the author’s motive for the labour of composition ; which, if a delight, is assuredly in this case also a labour, from the conscientious adherence to truth, or what seems to him truth, which marks the whole. This, we feel, is no young genius writing from a teeming imagination full of airy shapes, but one

who has learnt from experience, and, we must believe, real contact with trouble ; not through sympathy only—as in the school of young writers whose sensibility is quickly stirred to create pictures out of every feeling or emotion brought before them—but, together with sympathy, by actual participation in the emotions and sorrows portrayed. Though new as an author, it is not possible that this writer can be new to life ; there is no guesswork here, but hard-won knowledge, with ample space to look back upon the conflict, to mature thought out of transient pain. And space, too, for retrospect, not only of pain and sorrow, but of joy—space to live over again in the memory a peaceful happy existence—so peaceful amid such gentle excitements that the happiness was perhaps not realised till it was over. For this is another indirect but not less valuable moral of the book, to teach us that our real happiness consists in the less excited and agitated period of our lives, in a tenor of quiet days amid simple natural scenes. It teaches us to value these while we have them, proving, by the gentle pathos of a yearning memory, that it is the peaceful pleasures that wind the closest round the heart, which form the habits, mould the mind, satisfy the unconscious desires and needs of our nature, raise that structure of thoughts, fancies, habits, and ways which make up one's self, and which, except in the wounding of the most intimate affections, cause the widest, most irreparable breach when we lose them. There are country scenes in ‘Adam Bede’ looked back upon with an almost pas-

sionate tenderness, as though the senses ached for the genial old home.

What connection the writer may have had with country life we do not know. A close participation in its cares and business is not compatible with the indications of a thorough education ; but some sort of constant familiar intercourse with its details is evident, and forces us into speculations as to the real authorship of this remarkable work. Here is a picture of life of rare power, of close adherence to nature. Where has this knowledge been learnt ? through what processes has the author acquired his skill ? He at once stands on a different footing with us from the ordinary novelist, whose versatility enables him to make so much out of a little fact, such showy fabrics out of small suggestions. Somehow we never find ourselves attributing invention to this writer. Whether true or not, we believe that it is all real as far as the emotions of the actors are concerned ; that what is so vividly reported is taken from life ; that the author has witnessed, perhaps experienced, all the deeper, more powerful feelings so truthfully portrayed. And here we will commit ourselves to an opinion on this disputed question with the diffidence that people must feel who know that any day may test their discernment ; but we feel ourselves incapable of entering upon a discussion of ‘Adam Bede’ with our readers without expressing our suspicion that it is from a female pen. There are, it is true, many passages and whole scenes which do not support the view, but the

impression comes back in spite of them. The time is past for any felicity, force, or freedom of expression to divert our suspicions on this head : if women will write under certain conditions, perhaps more imperatively required from them than from men, as well as more difficult of attainment, it is proved that a wide range of human nature lies open to their comprehension ; so that if things in this novel seem to be observed from a woman's point of view, we need not discard the notion because it is well and ably done. While we make this concession, we wish it to be understood that we still hold our own conviction, that there are subjects and passions which will always continue man's inalienable field of inquiry ; but on this region we do not think the author of 'Adam Bede' trenches. Genius, to be sure, is of no sex, nor can we pretend to set limits to the insight of the imagination into every possible human scene or contingency ; and this shall be our answer if "George Eliot" proves to be no *nom de guerre*, or if Mr Anders is right and the author *is* Mr Joseph Liggins after all, as he persists in declaring himself ; or, as others say, a very young man, son of a small town tradesman, who has dug into other memories, and knows nothing of what he writes but through the fancy. But until the fact is proved against us we shall continue to think that the knowledge of female nature is feminine, not only in its details, which might be borrowed from other eyes, but in its whole tone of feeling ; that so is the full, close scrutiny of observation exercised in scanning every feature

of a bounded field of inquiry ; that the acquaintance with farm life in its minute particulars, and the secure ground on which the author always stands in matters of domestic housewifery, is another indication ; that the position of the writer towards every point in discussion is a woman's position—that is, from a stand of observation rather than more active participation. Then, as every supposition seems to us more probable than that 'Adam Bede' should prove to be a clergyman's work, and yet it is full of knowledge of clerical doings, this is to us another sign ; for women are by nature and circumstances the great clerical sympathisers ; and often the politics of a parish, its leaders and party divisions, the most stirring bit of public life that comes under their immediate eye. Lastly, there is the moral : women are known dearly to love a "well-directed moral." We will not multiply reasons, because, after all, impressions arise for which it is difficult to assign a cause. So, having thus satisfied our candour, we will not further invade the reserve the author seems determined to maintain in spite of all attacks made on it by 'Times' correspondents, but continue to apply such personal pronouns as *he* would have us use.

The influence of association is strongest on minds which, by nature active and observant, have always had leisure to allow congenial impressions to work into the inner being ; which are not too busy to disregard any circumstances of their position ; minds which people every familiar scene with a pleasant, leisurely crowd of thoughts and fancies, till each salient point

is hung and garlanded with these memorials, and haunted, as it were, by a summer hum of reverie. We all have scenes sacred by this influence, spots to which habit has so closely allied us that we see ourselves reflected in them ; we belong to them, and they to us ; in which every shadow has its secret, and every yearly returning sunbeam its especial affinity with ourselves ; where every form, every face, every voice, is charged with a significance beyond what meets the eye or ear. It is in such moments that we feel our whole being ; the past, the present are one ; a sense of harmony pervades us ; every gentle feeling is in the ascendant. When gifted minds come to describe scenes and persons with whom they hold these associations, they unconsciously fulfil the precept of charity, for they love their subject as they love themselves, and feel towards them as towards parts of themselves. And herein lies the difference of one talent for description with another, whether it be of an inanimate scene or a character. There is a power of description, graphic, lifelike, truthful, which engages and entertains us for a while, and then, we know not why, palls upon us. We cannot account for the fact that, in spite of our testimony to its success, our attention is not chained, our sympathy flags. We do not doubt the reason to be, because the author has not felt in the process, he has merely observed : there is no other connection between him and his subject. There are others who seem, by the same process, by the same words, to infuse a life and virtue into their work, as

though a warm south wind breathed around them ; and this is the genial influence of association connecting them closely with their subject. After all, there is something cold-blooded in mere portrait-painting —in giving features, touch by touch, just as we see them, however correctly it is done ; and we soon begin to feel this without thinking of the reason. But where the heart is concerned the perception is immediately quickened ; all things group themselves harmoniously ; instinct leads to the points which really tell upon other minds ; trifles are trifles no longer, when the light of love glorifies them ; and it is through association far more than through the inherent merits or beauties of any particular subject, that this love is generated. We love the scenes and people about us as we love our children, not because they are better or prettier than other places or other children, but because the good and beauty in them have spoken to us, are incorporated with our nature till we are blended in an absolute union.

We believe it is the power of association which gives the charm to the ‘Vicar of Wakefield.’ Goldsmith, through the wilful vagabondism of his career, looked back upon its one stationary period—to the rustic parsonage where life, hope, poetry, and wit first stirred and glowed within him ; to that home, peopled, as it must have been, by tempers that could not be seriously ruffled, since his provocations never alienated them from himself. This retrospect we look upon as the source of the exquisite repose which constitutes

that tale the most soothing and harmonious of fictions. No one can call this delightful book a correct picture of society and manners as they ever were or will be: there is little truth or fact about it; and sometimes, in our craving for this quality elsewhere, we muse over our own inconsistency in being more than content with such a travesty of actual life as it gives us. But it was real to him. He was not expatiating in mere fancies. We do not doubt that as he looked back his home did seem to him that Arcadian mixture of homeliness and refinement, of labour and leisure, of wisdom and folly, of knowledge and ignorance. If it portrayed no one else it pictures himself in all these points, and so, under the quaint veil of anomalies, is true at bottom. Nor do we doubt that all the more prominent scenes of humour had their counterpart in fact, even to the bargain of the green spectacles; since, for the edification of mankind, the author was invested with the somewhat contradictory powers of enacting absurdities in good faith, and afterwards so keenly appreciating his own blunders as to turn them into everlasting lessons for mankind.

And a certain homeliness is necessary to the full growth of associations: they must have, in some sense, to do with the business of life as well as its repose, with the happiness and dignity of work. The elegancies of the fashionable world, the domain of rigid proprieties, have no power of creating them: in the one, the mind is too feverishly engrossed with the present; in the other, under too much restraint. In ‘Adam

Bede' we recognise their sway in every page,—in the description of the village church, in Joshua Rann's mysteriously sonorous reading, in the damp sequestered coolness of Mrs Poyser's dairy. How every sense recalls its pleasantness! All summer with its sights and sounds and delicious labours seem to surround us as we read—

"Ah! I think I taste that whey now—with a flavour so delicate that one can hardly distinguish it from an odour; and with that soft gliding warmth that fills one's imagination with a still, happy dreaminess. And the light music of the dropping whey is in my ears, mingling with the twittering of a bird outside the wire network window—the window overlooking the garden, and shaded by tall gueldre roses."

Our own age, as we have said, differs from its predecessors in its gradual reclaiming large tracts of existence from the obscurity of an utter removal from all that interests the fancy. This can only be done by degrees, as some warm heart perceives in its own surroundings, in the life in which its own sympathies expand, a capability of being so delineated as to awake similar sympathies in others. It requires genius to awake to the fact that the people we live amongst are just as full of interest as those whom other people have made famous—that it is only dull people who see nothing to care for in their own society and immediate neighbourhood. To prove this, the author, turning the tables on those fastidious tempers who sigh for ideal excellence, favours us with the supercilious experiences of the publican, Mr Gedge, who, wherever he lived, found his neighbours—"and they

were all the people he knew—‘a poor lot, sir,’ big and little, a poor lot,” for his own part frankly avowing that

“The way in which I have come to the conclusion that human nature is lovable—the way I have learnt something of its deep pathos and its sublime mysteries—has been by living a great deal among people more or less commonplace and vulgar.”—Vol. ii. p. 17.

To delineate such nature does, as he says, need very exact truth, and it is this recognition of its difficulty which constitutes much of his strength.

“Dreading nothing, indeed, but falsity, which, in spite of one’s best efforts, there is still reason to dread. Falsehood is so easy, truth so difficult. Examine your words well, and you will find that even when you have no motive to be false, it is a very hard thing to say the exact truth, even about your own immediate feelings; much harder than to say something fine about them which is not the exact truth.”—Vol. ii. p. 5.

This author’s intense desire to be true is often a check upon his scenes, and throws him rather on investigating motives than giving their results in words. It sometimes looks as if he would venture on no expression until he had traced it to its source, and, consequently, we find that some of the characters who occupy us most speak very little; we follow their turns of thought, we see the desires that most actuate them, and do not know that they never betray themselves in words. In every crisis he gives us the gradual growth of a thought or impulse from its first unconscious stirring in the kindred nature to its maturity in speech and action. This habit, no doubt,

conduces to charity: a deed done, or even a word spoken, is an act over which we can sit in judgment; but how that word came to be spoken, the temptation which led to it, the human nature which yielded—there is quite sure to be something in the process with which we can sympathise; enough for pity and fellow-feeling to mingle with our virtuous indignation, and divest it of some of its harshness. Even Hetty, vain and hard as she is, into whose inner life we are so carefully initiated, who speaks so few words, and yet whom we feel to know so well, she is less repulsive to us than if we did not see the workings of her mind and the imperviousness to external influences for good which her narrow self-concentration has produced.

In consequence of this system of tracing effects to their causes, it has been said that the author of ‘Adam Bede’ represents people as all alike, comparing him, in this respect, with Mr Thackeray. With that gentleman’s works we are not now concerned; but the fact of showing all people as equally exposed to temptation, and liable to err, has nothing to do with proving them all alike—which can only be done by showing that all people alike *yield* to temptation. This is contrary, not only to the professed teaching, but to the whole bearing of the story—which enforces that men need not do wrong unless they like; that they have a voice within which distinctly forbids evil actions, and a power under certain conditions of resistance. To us the aim, and more than the aim, the real effect of it, is, to press upon us the mighty differ-

ence that conscience and a fixed principle of action makes in the same human natures. Ordinary novelists are prone to allow so much to human weakness, its passions and temptations, that conscience is shoved out of its place as a *part* of our nature, and made, as it were, an external power which we have to obey—not an inward voice, quite as much a part of us as our appetites, and as urgent in asserting its rights. Here there is no fatality, no inevitable sin, but free-will and awful responsibility. It is a fact that the most absorbing and original novel we have had for many a year is also the most sternly moral. The story admits us into three consciences, in the various degrees of efficiency which the habit of attending to their dictates will produce, round which the words and acts of the rest of the characters group themselves, and on which rule they work. In Adam this rule of conscience reigns supreme. The inevitable consequences of wrong-doing have pressed heavily and painfully on the author's mind, and have led him to trace the evil stream to its source and first conception, and show how alone it may be stopped. In Adam a temptation from the outset is not entertained, but judged by the inner rule implanted in his breast—there is no reference to the world's judgment: what other people think on a question of right and wrong is nothing to him; the sense of duty holds communion with him, commands and forbids with a master's sway; as, when a lad of eighteen, disgusted with the degrading troubles of home, he tries to run away, and walks back again

because he *can't* go on—his man's nature forbids it; “A pig may poke his nose into the trough and think o' nothing outside it; but if you've got a man's heart and soul in you, you can't be easy a-making your own bed an' leaving the rest to lie on the stones.” Every conviction with him is a thing to be acted on, every deed a thing that cannot be undone. “It's well we should feel as life's a reckoning we can't make twice over; there's no real making amends in this world, any more nor you can mend a wrong subtraction by doing your addition right. . . . You can never do what's wrong without breeding sin and trouble more than you can ever see the end on: it's like a bit of bad workmanship—you never see the end o' the mischief it'll do. . . . I hate that talk o' people, as if there was a way o' making amends for everything. They'd more need to be brought to see as the wrong they do can never be altered. When a man's spoiled his fellow-creature's life, he's no right to comfort himself with thinking good may come out of it. Somebody else's good doesn't alter her shame and misery.”

With Arthur Donnithorne conscience holds a divided empire with the opinion of the world. He is more seemingly lovable than Adam, for he has a more constant wish to please—it is a necessity in him to be liked and loved. “Deeds of kindness to him were as easy as a bad habit;” but he does not view actions in their naked aspect of right and wrong. What others think, how they appear to the world, is as much his standard; and self obscures the claims of others.

Temptations are entertained and played with, consequences kept out of sight. He has a self-complacent estimate of himself, which always interposes a barrier to any strict scrutiny of motives. The author's mocking satire unmasks the inner complacency of such minds. "Arthur had an agreeable consciousness that his faults were all of a generous kind, impetuous, warm-hearted, leonine—never crawling, crafty, reptilian. It was not possible for Arthur to do anything mean, or dastardly, or cruel. 'No, I'm a devil of a fellow for getting myself into a hobble, but I always take care the load shall fall on my own shoulders.' . . . He was nothing if not good-natured. . . . You perceive that Arthur was a good fellow! . . . There was a sort of implicit confidence in him that he was really such a good fellow at bottom, Providence would not treat him harshly." He has faith in restitution and making amends, and shrinks from the irrevocableness of his own wrong-doing sternly pressed upon him by Adam.

"Arthur would so gladly have persuaded himself that he had done no harm, and if no one had told him the contrary, he could have persuaded himself so much better. Nemesis can seldom forge a sword for herself out of our consciences, out of the suffering we feel, in the suffering we may have caused. Our moral sense learns the manners of good society, and smiles when others smile. But when some rough person gives rough names to our actions, she is apt to take part against us."—Vol. ii. p. 266.

The author is mistrustful of mere natural gifts, and pleases himself in reducing this seemingly generous, candid temper to the supposed necessity of a mean

lie. “Our deeds determine us as much as we determine our deeds, and until we know what has been or will be, the peculiar combination [of outward with inward facts which constitutes a man’s critical actions, it will be better not to think ourselves wise about his character. There is a terrible coercion in our deeds. . . . The second wrong presents itself to him as the only practicable right. . . . No man can escape this vitiating effect of an offence against his own sentiment of right.” But for all this Arthur has a conscience, though it needs foreign aid to make itself fully felt, as with average minds, who have blunted its edge, it always does. Thus before Adam’s words of hatred and contempt, “all-screening self-excuse, which rarely falls quite away while others respect us, forsook him for an instant, and he stood face to face with the first great irrevocable evil he had ever committed !” Arthur then represents conscience reduced to the standard to which ordinary men, subject to the ordinary impulses to good and evil, bring it.

In Hetty it suffers a further eclipse. She has no inner rule of action. She illustrates the pleasures and the pains of vanity. Self is the limit of her horizon, the beginning and the end of her hopes, fears, and desires. If it were not for that childishness which detracts from the weight of her responsibility, hers would be too painful a character to dwell on, drawn as it is with such microscopic insight into weaknesses and deficiencies, and with such wonderful knowledge of the peculiar temptations of youth and beauty under

the influence of vanity. Thoughtless, hard-hearted youth! how true it is “that young souls in such pleasant deliriums as hers are as unsympathising as butterflies sipping nectar! They are isolated from all appeals by a barrier of dreams, by invisible looks, and impalpable aims.” Her “silly imagination” is always weaving her own future, intent on her own luxurious dreams. She has no thought or interest to give to anything outside herself, and, as Mrs Poyser says, “There’s nothing seems to give her a turn i’ the inside.” You can’t wake a response in her heart. Even her lover is nothing to her compared to his gifts, and never once interposes between her and her self-idolatry. In her misery, “her own misery filled her heart, she had no room for other people’s sorrow.” She has never listened to an inner voice—her only good, praise and admiration; and shame—her conscience. Vanity had stopped up every moral inlet. Religion had taken no hold on her; its teaching had gone for nothing: “for any practical result of strength in life or trust in death she had never appropriated a single Christian idea or Christian feeling.” It is an unflinching, almost a remorseless picture, only justified by a knowledge of the mischief vanity can cause, and, as we should think, a feminine insight into men’s weakness for grace and beauty, and their utter blindness to what may lie underneath a fair outside. We do not think young people often reach such an absolute deadness, but they not seldom approach nearer to it—to circumscribing every interest into “a narrow fantastic calculation of

their own pleasures and pains," than, looking into their clear eyes and candid brows, we could suppose. And the picture of beautiful Hetty may furnish a lesson to many who seem to assume that youth has, in virtue of its innocence, an inexhaustible stock of goodness which nothing can spoil, and may therefore be safely left to a selfish appropriation of every amusement and indulgence that falls in its way.

As for Hetty's delineation as a work of art, we can hardly over-estimate it. We realise her beauty; we see her that Sunday morning, fresh and radiant for church—when, if ever a girl was made of roses, that girl was Hetty. Her naughty tempers only make her the prettier, like a kitten setting up its back. We watch her through the strange mysteries of that secret toilet before the old mirror; we follow her in her stately walk of exultant vanity, and feel that "it would be impossible to be wise on the subject of ear-rings," as we see these potent stimulants to vanity glittering in her ears and enhancing her beauty. We understand the power of her wily blandishments over her poor duped honest lover,—for beauty is in itself an education, and gives the knowledge which is power. And we enter, too, into the additional narrowness of heart that ignorance will induce. Hetty's plotting, scheming little brain knew nothing of romances. She had never shared the fancied sorrows of others; and we back the selfishness of a non-novel-reading flirt for concentration and pitilessness against the world. When her misery and shame come upon her, we comprehend

what they must be to a mind which had no desires out of the world's estimation, and whose whole world was centred in one little spot; for the narrower our range of acquaintance and knowledge, thought and imagination, the greater power *shame* has upon us. Geographically, the world is a large place—to most of us it is circumscribed enough; and to some all their world is the village, the street, the court in which they live. No other eyes, opinions, or judgments are thought of than are comprised within their narrow bounds. Thus when Hetty "looked out from her secret misery towards the possibility of her acquaintance ever knowing what had happened, it was as the sick and weary prisoner might think of the possible pillory. They would think her conduct shameful, and shame was torture, 'that was poor little Hetty's conscience.'"

And with this poor little trivial soul, the noble high-minded hero of the piece falls in love: on her he fastens his heart. "Of course," says the author, with surely feminine satire, "of course I know that, as a rule, sensible men fall in love with the most sensible women of their acquaintance, see through all the pretty deceits of coquettish beauty, never imagine themselves loved where they are not loved, cease to love on all proper occasions, marry the woman most fitted for them on every occasion;" but Adam is admitted to be an exception to this general law, and perhaps we feel his mistake more natural, as certainly more possible to sympathise with, than his second choice, the

fair Methodist preacher. For it is very true that when men of feeling fall in love with beauty it is as a symbol of goodness and truth.

" Hetty's face had a language that transcended her feelings. There are faces that nature charges with a meaning and pathos not belonging to the single human soul that flutters beneath them, but speaking the joys and sorrows of foregone generations —eyes that tell of deep love which doubtless has been, and is somewhere, but not paired with those eyes—perhaps paired with pale eyes that can say nothing, just as a national language may be instinct with poetry, unfelt by the lips that use it."

Where a Methodist preacher is heroine, the question of religion must be more predominant than it is usually permitted to be in a novel; but '*Adam Bede*' is an embodiment of the author's whole experience, and he has taken his own line of what is eligible and suitable. Dinah, then, represents the religious principle as Adam does conscience, and, as far as general acceptance goes, is a success; but for ourselves she wants the weight of that reality which distinguishes the rest. She is a spirit amongst bodies of flesh and blood. As the saying now is—we do not believe in her. It is not that she is too good. There are women as self-denying, as humble, as sympathising, as gracious, as full of all womanly and housewifely accomplishments, but we do not think they preach. We are not here entering into the question of their right to preach; but the woman who is impelled to such utterances is absorbed by them; her mind will be diverted into one channel; her strictly feminine duties will be a work of principle, not of congenial natural occupation. The author

labours to make Dinah one of the group, and represents her—what such a woman would not be—at *home* amongst them. She would be more so if her character were more tinctured by her opinions. Of course a young woman enthusiastic enough to *preach* would be witnessing and testifying in private life, and either converting or making herself intolerable to the people about her; but though she uses some Methodist phrases, she has little of the animus of that sect in her: she is liberal, eclectic, enlightened, independent, and therefore unreal. Something is wanting to make us understand how such very natural people can be at their ease in that restrained demure presence. Except for the subtle delight old Lisbeth found in tormenting her younger son, we don't follow her pertinacious determination to get her for Adam. Mrs Poyser's coruscations of splenetic humour play round her; but they don't fit—they neither amuse, rouse, nor irritate her. Mrs Poyser, to be sure, is one of those who can speak their minds without the necessity for sympathy; and her opinions are too decided to need support from without. She would be awed by Dinah no more than by the old squire. Her view of Methodism was a fixed idea, of which she liked to deliver herself. The eccentricities of spiritual natures could find no opening to her cold common-sense.

“ ‘Direction !’ she exclaims; ‘when there’s a bigger maggot than usual in your head you call it direction, and then nothing can stir you. You’re like the statty i’ the outside o’ Treddles’on Church, a starin’ and a smilin’ whether it’s fair weather or foul.’ ”
—Vol. i. p. 144

But all strictness found something akin to her nature ; so we understand her respecting the rigid attire and abjuring of recreation ; and there is a touch of quaint humility, not foreign to the practical before the spiritual mind, in her estimate of a pure presence.

"An' she makes one feel safer when she's i' the house, for she's like the driven snow, anybody might sin for two as had her at their elbow."—Vol. iii. p. 282.

We do not deny that Dinah is a beautiful creation, but the other inmates of Hayslope are something too genuine for such complimentary holiday terms. Then Dinah's sermon, eloquent and good in itself, does not strike us as probable under the circumstances,—not what a woman would preach, though very like what the author would work out in his closet. Its plan is the result of reasoning, not impulse ; what a person would write who had studied the line taken by St Paul in his sermon to the Athenians. A woman of Dinah's class and views would have begun at once to assert some leading truth of the Gospel, not have led up to it by the gradual process of proving God's providential care and our inborn consciousness of the being of a God. And so, in the very beautiful prayer in Hetty's cell, the author's own method of reasoning (as in the apostrophe, "She cries to me, thy weak creature ! Saviour, it is a blind cry to Thee") is more apparent than the actual train of thought likely to direct Dinah.

Seth, the other exponent of the purely spiritual element in religion, is, we think, a natural imperson-

ation, but it is rather at the expense of his dignity. The author's sympathies are not at work as in the delineation of his brother. His heart goes with the man whose work had always been part of his religion, and " who from very early days saw clearly that good carpentry was God's will—was that form of God's will that most nearly concerned him,"—not with the meditative, devotional type. The value of Seth's wonderful forbearance and long-suffering under his mother's uniform partiality and disparagement, is lowered by a want of firmness and decision, of edge and vigour. The endurance is partly physical, his spirituality a constitutional bent. We do not pity him as we ought under old Lisbeth's shameful treatment and poignant injuries, because, perhaps, he does not feel them poignantly,—lost in meditations which his practical brother could only patronise. "Th' lad liked to sit full o' thoughts he could give no account of; they'd never come t' anything, but they made him happy."

Nor though Methodism, as it was seen rousing the lethargy of that age, is made to occupy the highest religious ground, does it receive the sanction either of suiting the noblest, firmest, most practical class of minds, or of success. Adam marries Dinah, but does not hear her preach ; the author feels he must call in an Order of Conference to stop these effusions rather than lower his hero's supremacy by such a domestic anomaly. And while there are allusions to the work done in the first stage of Methodism as distinguished from its modern development, it is not represented as

falling in with that phase of life with which the author is familiar. Dinah's one convert, Chad's Bess—that Bess whose first puzzled speculation had been what pleasure and satisfaction there could be in life to a young woman who wore a cap like Dinah's—needs much supervision, and elicits Mrs Poyser's assurance “that she'll be flaunting i' new finery three weeks after she's gone, and no more go on in her new ways without watching, than a dog'll stand on its hind legs when there's nobody looking.” No; it is our church, our establishment, with all the moss and lichen of its antiquity upon it undisturbed by modern influences, that has his heart. The mellowing sunshine of memory dwells on some past scene of perfect harmony and fitness between pastor and flock; and though the reason says that things may and really have changed for the better, the whole soul of the writer is bent in raising such an image of peace and genial associations, that the reader is forced to regret, with even poignant longing, that the modern march of events is sweeping away the realities of such scenes; that there can be no Mr Irwines now—the times won't admit it,—and certainly no Joshua Ranns; no such churches, for they would be restored; no such sonorous choirs, because an harmonium and a chorus of Sunday scholars would have taken their place; no wail of old Psalm tunes, “because, like the pipe of Pan, such melodies have died out with the ears that love to listen to them,” and the severe style has superseded them; and finally, we fear, no such large array of comely rustic faces, which

too probably are engulfed by the Methodist and Baptist meetings.

It is well to reclaim from the past such a portrait as Mr Irwine's: his faults are not the faults of our day; his merits are worth study, if it will teach how he knit himself into the affections of his flock. The portrait altogether charms by its harmony; whether we ought or not, we pity these simple people when the change of dynasty comes, and they exchanged all he had for what he was supposed to want—the difference so aptly summed up by Mrs Poyser: "Mr Irwine was like a good meal o' victual, you were the better for him without thinking on it. Mr Ryde was like a dose o' physic; he griped you and worreted you, and after all he left you much the same." There is the frank admission of failure in some essentials, but what he did teach went home. His presence inspired confidence, and was in itself a kind of teaching. "It is summut like," says Mrs Poyser, "to see such a man as that i' the desk of a Sunday! as I say to Poyser, it's like looking at a full crop o' wheat, or a pasture with a fine dairy o' cows in it. It makes you think the world's comfortable like." Or, as old Bartle Massey expresses it, "Ay, ay, he's good metal; he gives the right ring when you try him, our parson does." It is not amiss, in the self-complacency of the present age, to have what we feel a true portrait from the old "dead" time, reversing some of our ideas. Perhaps it is hardly fair to dwell too much on that other distinction, that if his doctrine was not as high as other

people's, yet " he acted pretty much up to what he said ; he didn't set up for being so different from other folks one day, and then be as like 'em as two peas the next ;" because, of course, the higher the standard the more risk there is of falling off ; but this is one of the hits on clerical matters which we have noticed, as well as the further one on the prevailing ignorance of common things in merely professional clergy, contrasted with Mr Irwine's quickness and general knowledge : " I've always mistrusted that sort o' learning as leaves folks foolish and unreasonable about business," though no doubt this ignorance does imply want of sympathy and an undue selfish absorption in our own particular pursuits.

The state of religious intelligence in a rural population must have been subject for speculation to so keen an observer. His conclusions would not satisfy the abstract requirements of a theologian, but he carries his reader along with him in his charitable solutions of a difficulty : showing light where the form may be indefinite, and putting a pious interpretation on many an ignorant heterodoxy, as where Lisbeth, at her husband's funeral,

" Had a vague belief that the psalm was doing him good ; it was part of that decent burial which she would have thought it a greater wrong to withhold from him, than to have caused him many unhappy days while he was living. The more there was said about her husband, the more there was done for him ; surely the safer he would be. It was poor Lisbeth's blind way of feeling that human love and pity are a ground of faith in some other love."—Vol. ii. p. 49.

Or in Bess Cranage's ritualistic view of her deficiencies—

"She had always been considered a naughty girl. She was conscious of it. If it was necessary to be very good, she must be in a bad way. She couldn't find her places at church as Sally Rann could ; she had often been tittering when she curcheyed to Mr Irwine."—Vol. i. p. 47.

And Joshua Rann's church principles pass without a protest from his pastor because he knew that something deeper remained unexpressed—

"I like a pint wi' my pipe an' a neighbourly chat at Mester Casson's now an' then, for I was brought up i' the church, thank God ! and ha' been parish clerk this two an' thirty year. I should know what the church religion is."

Even Adam's love for the church service is not allowed to be the consent of his reason after study and reflection, for here association comes in—"The secret of our emotions never lies on the bare object, but on its subtle relations to our own past"—a sentiment which throws light on the author's entire views on such things.

We do not know whether our literature anywhere possesses such a closely true picture of purely rural life as 'Adam Bede' presents. Every class that makes up a village community has its representative ; and not only is the dialect of the locality accurately given, but the distinct inflection of each order. The field-labourer's rude utterance, "as incapable of an undertone as a cow or a stag," receives a touch of cultivation when it is used by the mechanic ; and these two,

again, are varied in the farmhouse ; while each individual has appropriate peculiarities which give a distinct truth of portraiture. No person, we apprehend, can be an adept in minute observation of character, or at least in delineating it, without a correct ear and a good verbal memory. When we have a distinct idea of the words people will use, we are led to a clearer notion of the range of their ideas ; accuracy in expression secures an amount of accuracy of thought. And well does the midland county dialect come out in this its first appearance, as far as we know, as a written language : how faithfully it expresses pathos, commonsense, and humour ! On Adam's lips how forcible, on Mrs Poyser's tongue how pungent, in old Lisbeth how querulous ! All these niceties of observation show themselves in the differences of intellect and cultivation which each calling develops. What a stride there is between the village mechanic and the village labourer ! How sharp, intelligent, and ready does the former become under the constant demand on his resources ! for it is well known that a really clever rustic workman is the best and most inventive man in his trade ; the most equal to all its demands, the most capable of profiting by new advantages. Adam is a picture of a good country carpenter as well as of a good man. And what truth in the various labourers, influenced as each is by his calling ! Alick the foreman, to whom we are first introduced eating cold beans with his pocket-knife with so much relish —a saturnine character with a “ventral laugh ” ; whose

honest parsimony made him feed the poultry with small handfuls because large ones affected him painfully with a sense of profusion; who spent his life in a kind of dull rivalry with his kind, and especially with "Tim," the two who lived together, and yet, as labourers only can, rarely spoke to each other, and never looked at each other even over their dish of cold potatoes; and who was of opinion

"That church, like other luxuries, was not to be indulged in often by a foreman who had the weather and the ewes on his mind. 'Church! nay, I'n gotten summat else to think on,' was an answer he often uttered in a tone of bitter significance that silenced further question."—Vol. ii. p. 20.

Old Kester Bale, who knew the "natur" of all farming work, and used to worship his own skill in his curtseying survey of well-thatched ricks every Sunday morning. Ben Tholloway, the one pilferer that infests all farms, whose master did wisely to be lenient, for "Ben's views of depredation were narrow; the house of correction might have enlarged them." With what truth and humour is the harvest supper described, with how strong a sympathy for the occasion! Hot roast-beef we are made to feel as sublime a thing as these men must feel it, who, every day in the year except Sunday, eat their dinner cold under a hedge. And the silence! the real business of the occasion too serious for a divided attention, "even if these farm-labourers had anything to say, which they had not." The harvest song, and the thumping, and the subsequent slow unthawing under the influence of

the ale! The first vain efforts for a song! The “Come, Tim,” to the bashful minstrel, seized by the company as a “conversational opportunity,” and echoed all round the table: for everybody could say “Come, Tim!” Tim’s surly sheepishness, and next the whole party very much in earnest to hear David’s song till it was clear the lyrism of the evening was as yet in the cellar! Its final release from that confinement, Tim and David singing at once, till

“Old Kester, with an entirely unmoved and immovable aspect, suddenly set up a quavering treble, as if he had been an alarm, and the time was come for him to go off.”—Vol. iii. p. 308.

The whole picture is real in every detail, and in its place inappreciable, relieving the reader after the too painful scenes which precede it.

There is a dance, too, in another part of the story with which we sympathise: of course a country-dance, so dear to memory—a “glorious country-dance, best of all dances”—the dance bewailed in many a tender elegy, which, if the pen of genius could be allowed a voice, would again be in the ascendant. “Pity it was not a boarded floor, then the rhythmic stamping of the thick shoes would have been better than drums. That merry stamping, that gracious nodding of the head, that waving bestowal of the hand, where can we see them now?”

But all the author’s humour centres in Mrs Poyser, a new development of an old type. Mrs Poyser never tries to amuse: she is the veriest utilitarian in her profession, and takes too business-like a view of life

for smiles in her own person, or for any sanction of them in others. We almost apologise to her for finding mere diversion in so much cool, caustic good sense. Indeed, her power lies in denuding everything of adventitious distinction, of its merely ornamental character, and reducing it to its first principles. Hetty's beauty is a constant mark for her analysis: "she is no better nor a cherry wi' a hard stone inside." Her pretty tasteful finery is "rags." "It's what *rag* she can get to stick on her as she's thinking on from morning till night." Whatever is not useful is worthless in her eyes, as she objects to lap-dogs because they are good neither for "butchers' meat nor barking." She is perpetually tracing things to their causes—to that *inside* which no fair exterior can divert from her thoughts. No dignity can live through the licence of her tongue: some apt but derogatory comparison will surely drag it through the mire. She is more than equal, she is mistress of every occasion, superior to every antagonist: her tongue is always trenchant, inexorable, always conqueror. We begin by pitying her maids—that "Molly," whose first hiring and widowed mother are perpetually cast up at her; that "poor two-fisted thing" whose "equils for awkwardness her mistress niver knew;" for whom she has a running lecture, which she takes up where she left it off like a tune on a barrel-organ. But we soon learn that she is no coward oppressor of the weak, and, moreover, that there is honour in furnishing a subject and matter for her inexhaustible powers of illustration. Besides,

Molly is avenged : the author gives her and the reader this satisfaction in the scene of broken crockery. Mrs Poyser may speak her mind to all the world, even to the powerful and malignant old squire, unscathed, but Molly stands on another footing. For as the exponent of certain virtues in their humblest development she is a favourite : her ready “ Lawk ” in response to the children’s demands for wonder and sympathy, contrasts genially with Hetty’s indifference to their pleasures. She is a bit of warm-hearted humanity, and on the whole valued as such. Mrs Poyser’s especial work is taking down pretension and resisting encroachment : she is merciful where her rights are acknowledged. Her husband knows this, and has an easy life of it—shaking with silent laughter at her sallies, winking to his allies when she arouses to action, and enjoying her successes, even when they risk his interests. Now and then she sets him down, but he takes it meekly, as when he ventures to hint, “ Thee’dst be as angry as could be wi’ me if I said a word against anything she did ; ” and she replies, “ Because you’d very like be finding fault wi’out reason. But there’s reason i’ what I say, else I should na say it.” Many a good thing does she pour into his ear in compensation for his forbearance. If she despises all mankind, she despises him least : he is slow of speech, to be sure, “ but what he says he’ll stand by ” ; and as for slowness, “ the men are mostly so tongue-tied that you’re forced partly to guess what they mean like the dumb animals.” Her line is never complimentary, but her husband

I must appreciate the implied homage in her question, “Where’s the use of a woman having brains of her own, if she’s tackled to a geck as everybody’s a laughing at? She might as well dress herself fine and sit back’ards on a donkey.” Herself a pattern of stability, subversion of natural order is her type of weakness. “The right end up’ards” is strength and prosperity; a foolish wife is “your head in a bog, and when it’s there, your heels (in the shape of unprofitable short-horns) may as well go after it.” And the excuse of bad managers, who say the weather’s in fault, is dismissed with “as there’s folks ’ud stand on their heads, and then say the fault was in their boots.”

Mrs Poyser’s readiness at illustration is too much a peculiarity of the author’s own for us to suppose it borrowed from another. All his characters are rich in this gift, but he has done well to show it in its efflorescence, where the vigour and independence of a farmer’s wife’s position gives it a natural home, and affords it such an infinite variety of material. A woman has no better field than a dairy farm for the exercise of her own especial gifts, and may develop into anything when, as Mrs Poyser says, she earns half and saves half the rent; while the consciousness of usefulness in the great primitive occupation of mankind gives a certain dignity which no other calling imparts. She controls the fate and destiny of so many animate and inanimate things, and is always face to face with the productive powers of nature. And how well the sense of responsibility is conveyed! We quite understand

what it must be to lie awake with twenty gallons of milk on the mind ; and when her keen forethought raises the picture of “ Bethel with his horse and cart coming about the back places, and making love to both the gells at once,” we see it all, and agree with her “ that if we are to go to ruin it shanna be wi’ having our back kitchen turned into a public.” And after all, in spite of the rough rind, how genial she is ! with her mother’s love for Totty, that perfect type of farmhouse infancy ; with her wifely pleasure in setting out her plentiful table for her husband, his father, and his friends ; with her calm satisfaction watching the cattle in that cheery scene, the farmyard so dear to this author, whose keen observation has been busy many a time taking in the meaning and causes of its seeming hubbub and confusion, and tracing effects to their causes just as keenly as though a human heart were depicted. We see Mrs Poyser serenely knitting at her door as the evening bustle begins, the patient beasts running confusedly into the wrong places ; for the alarming din of the bull-dog was mingled with more distant sounds, the tremendous crack of the waggoner’s whip which the timid feminine creatures, with pardonable superstition, imagined to have some relation to their own movements ; the silly “ calves ” ; the ducks drinking dirty water, to get a drink with as much body in it as possible ; the strong-minded donkey ; Marty wickedly provoking the gander by hissing at him ;—every stroke of the picture is by a sure and loving hand, and gives an intense reality to the human

life it surrounds. The scenes of Sunday peace in village and farmhouse are as feelingly true in the days of old Sunday leisure thus commemorated :—

“Surely all leisure is hurry, compared with a sunny walk through the fields from ‘afternoon church,’ as such walks used to be in those old leisurely times, when the boat, gliding sleepily along the canal, was the newest locomotive power; when Sunday books had most of them old brown leather covers, and opened with remarkable precision always in one place.”—Vol. iii. p. 283.

The blacksmith’s Sunday clean face is recorded, which always made his little grand-daughter cry at him as a stranger; and “Timothy’s Bess,” standing at her own door nursing her baby, while others went to church, “feeling, as women do in that position, that nothing else can be expected of them”; and indoors where the clock is ticking in a peaceful Sunday manner, and the very stones and tubs seemed quieter than usual, and the water gently dripping from the pump is distinctly heard. Queen and controller of such a world, Mrs Poyser, in spite of the weight on her shoulders and the hard work on her hands, ought to be and is a happy woman. That she is an arrogant one, confident first in the superiority of the female sex, and next in her supremacy over all other females, is perhaps true; but conceit in her case is imposing: the author elsewhere, and on other subjects, shows the petty side of this quality; for which he has an agreeable, sly appreciation in every phase and aspect, from the pragmatical parade of knowledge in the Scotch gardener, to the condescension which led Arthur to

put on his uniform to please the tenants (we are told “he had not the least objection to gratify them in this way, as the uniform was very advantageous to his figure”), and the act of generous forethought of Joshua Rann, who had “provided himself with his fiddle in case any one should have a sufficiently pure taste to prefer dancing to a solo on that instrument.” Not that we are allowed to laugh superciliously at *his* rustic vanities, for Joshua has an ear both for reading and music, and the author is not more aristocratic than nature herself.

“This may seem a strange mode of speaking about the reading of a parish clerk, a man in rusty spectacles, with stubbly hair, a large occiput, and a prominent crown ; but that is nature’s way. She will allow a gentleman with a splendid physiognomy and poetic aspirations to sing wofully out of tune, and not give him the slightest hint of it, and takes care that some narrow-browed fellow trolling a ballad in the corner of a pot-house shall be as true to his intervals as a bird.”—Vol. ii. p. 48.

We have assumed in our readers a knowledge of the plot, for it is too late to introduce this popular tale to their attention ; our part has rather been to look for the source of its interest and the qualities and aims of its author. Though the story sometimes flags, and the plot has its weak points, it is effective for its purpose of delineating character ; and we have few scenes more telling, few situations more original and striking in the conception, than the battle in the wood between Adam and Arthur—the real scene of Arthur’s punishment and humiliation—in which the author satisfies his demand for justice ; for as for his subsequent years

of expatriation and repentance, our experience of life tells us that such expiations are not undertaken by the Arthurs of real life ; but the battle, the blow, the vengeance, might be and are facts to our apprehension and consent—so fully is all worked out : the transitions of feelings ; the conflicts between new and old sensations ; the alternation of rage on the first discovery of the lovers, with Adam's horror when he thought he had killed his rival ; the concentration in the present as he feebly recovers ; the affectionate tender attentions ; the inevitable walk arm-in-arm ; the returning memory and mistrust. Two persons are seldom brought together in a more striking and critical situation ; the reader's sympathy alternates between the actors with the liveliest curiosity ; events, and the emotions consequent on them, succeed one another in what we feel a natural order ; we read with a growing confidence in the author's mastery of the position he has imagined. And Adam's passionate appeals for justice, when the terrible truth is forced upon him, are of equal power, and have a real weight on the reader. To how many cases are they not applicable ? “ Is he to go free while they lay all the punishment upon her, so weak and young ? I'll go to him ; I'll bring him back ; I'll make him look at her in her misery. He shall look at her till he can't forget it ; it shall follow him night and day—as long as he lives it shall follow him ; he shan't escape wi' lies this time ! ” Hetty's wanderings, too, the fascination of her dreaded home, her confession, are all-engrossing ; and all the author's pity and

tenderness are lavished on Adam, in the prostration of strong and generous nature under an overwhelming calamity. There is courage as well as truth to nature in allowing him to recover from such a blow. It is the pleasure of ordinary romance to represent the finer clay of humanity as so susceptible of sorrow that a blow to the tenderer affections is final—there is no rising again from it; the victim lives, perhaps, but is never suffered again to enjoy life. No second morn may light up the heaven of heroes and heroines. All our experience tells us it is not so; all of us have witnessed and blessed the inherent power of reaction in a healthy nature; and the author of '*Adam Bede*', because he knows it to be so, has not only restored Adam to serenity, but has made him happy in a second attachment, concluding some very tender and just thoughts on the work sorrow is designed to achieve, with the counsel which may be received as the watch-word and motive of his story. "Let us rather be thankful that our sorrow lives as an indestructible force, only changing its form as forces do, passing from pain to sympathy, the one poor word which includes all our best insight and our best love."

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